A ROSE OF OLD QUEBEC

Anne Hollingsworth Wharton

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By Anne Hollingsworth Wharton

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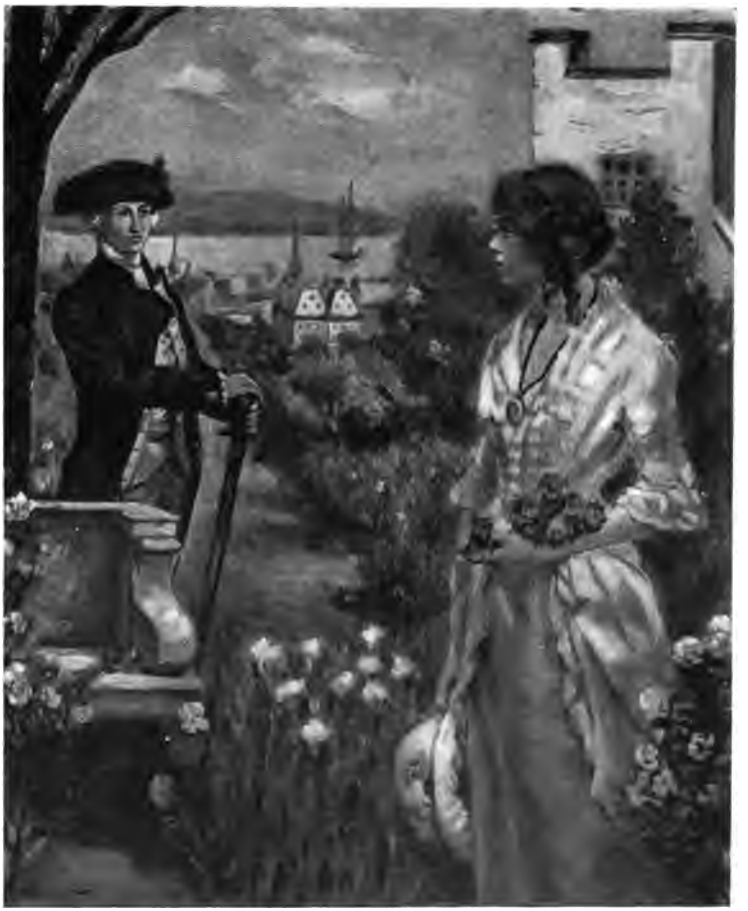

"SHE TURNED TO HIM A WELCOMING FACE WHICH RIVALLED HER ROSES IN COLOR"

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A ROSE OF OLD QUEBEC

BY

ANNE HOLLINGSWORTH WHARTON

AUTHOR OF "THROUGH COLONIAL DOORWAYS," "ITALIAN DAYS AND WAYS," "IN CHÂTEAU LAND," ETC.

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TO MY SISTER

FRANCES ELECTA WHARTON,

THIS LITTLE TALE IS DEDICATED,
WITH GRATEFUL APPRECIATION
OF HER INTEREST IN IT WHEN
IT WAS STILL IN THE MAKING

FOREWORD

THE writer begs the reader well equipped with dates and facts, if such an one should happen to glance over these pages, to overlook certain manifest anachronisms, notably the antedating of the recognition by England of the distinguished services of Lord Nelson; the extending of the activity and usefulness of Sir Joshua Reynolds even beyond the long term of years in which he contributed to British art; and again, what no beautiful woman would be likely to deem an error, the lengthening of the period in which the Duchess of Devonshire reigned as Queen of Beauty in her native land. For these and other inaccuracies, necessitated by the exacting demands of story-telling, the writer claims the indulgence of her readers.

A. H. W.

August, 1913,
On the Heights,
CRAGSMOOR, NEW YORK.

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PART I

OLD QUEBEC

"Je voudrais que la rose
Fût encore au rosier,
Et que le rosier même
Fût à la mer jeté.
Il y a longtemps que je t'aime,
Jamais je ne t'oublierai."

A ROSE OF OLD QUEBEC

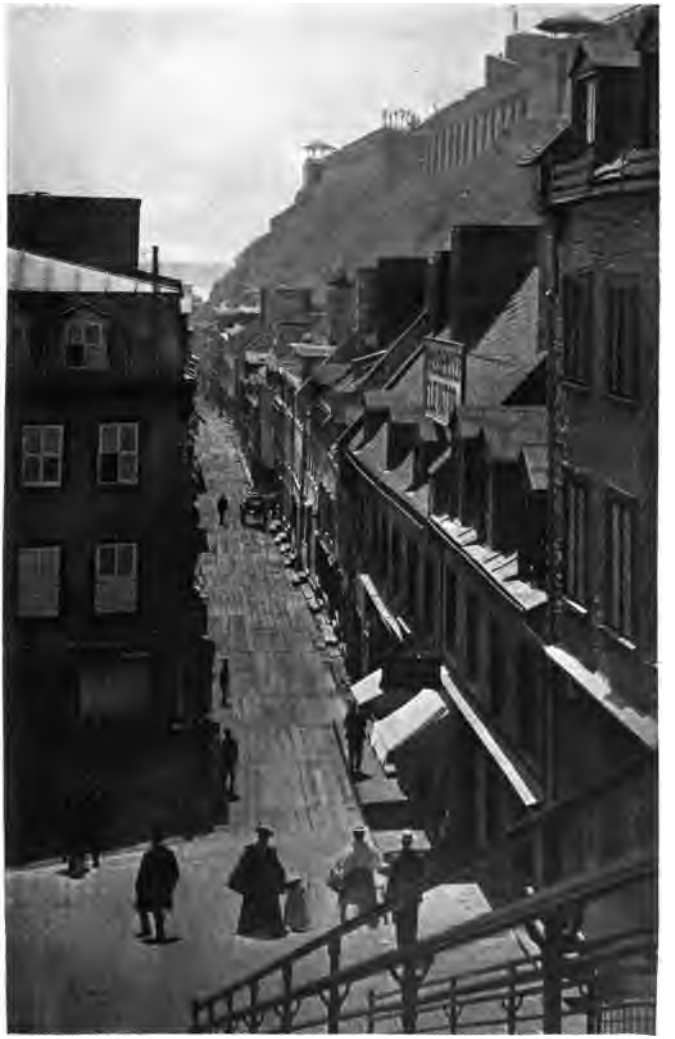
CHAPTER I

The Mystery of the Panel

Upon my first visit to the City of Quebec, it was my good fortune to be lodged in a quaint house on the ancient street of St. Louis, near the Dufferin Terrace, and the then recently built Château Frontenac. The mansion in which I was stopping, with its spacious rooms, high ceilings, and air of past grandeur, piqued my curiosity. When I asked my friend, the Abbé C——, about the house, he said that it could not have belonged to a noble family, as it lacked the gable end and *porte-cochère* upon the street which were the infallible marks of a nobleman's abode. The Abbé C——, who is *par excel-*

lence the antiquarian of this ancient stronghold, illustrated the distinction between the houses of the opulent and fashionable citizens and those of the nobility, by pointing out to me the ruins of a seignorial mansion near the old Laval University which in its present state of dilapidation, presented a sad contrast to its past grandeur. Through the *porte-cochère* under which had once passed the coaches and chairs of worshipful lords and stately ladies of the old *régime,* there now lumbered heavy carts freighted with wood to be stored in the ancient courtyard.

I was disappointed when I found that the good Abbé had no thrilling tales to relate about my present habitation although he had many an interesting story to tell of the other old mansions on St. Louis Street and upon the still picturesque Petit Champlain and the Sault aux Matelots. Though lacking the crowning glory of gable end and *porte-*



LITTLE CHAMPLAIN STREET, QUEBEC

cochère, I was convinced that my present abode had been the residence of people of consequence. The room in which I was lodged had once been part of a spacious *salon,* one end of which had been wainscoted, and through several layers of paint I could readily trace the outline of a number of panels. The woodwork had originally been painted in white, as appeared in spots where the dark paint had peeled off. One panel, on the left side of the mantel, carved in a graceful scroll pattern and painted in yellowish white, stood out in relief against the surrounding darkness. This panel attracted my attention when I first entered the room, and decided me to choose it rather than the front chamber whose windows looked out upon St. Louis Street. It aroused my curiosity, this odd panel, which had been deserted by its fellows, like Dr. Holmes' " Last Leaf," and during the first night that I slept in the

great, high-posted bedstead, it filled my dreams with visions of plumed knights and fair ladies in powder and patches. One charming face with dark eyes and hair, sometimes gay, more often sad, floated persistently through those dreams, a face which I had occasion to recall a few days later.

One morning while lying upon my sofa idly dreaming, my thoughts wandering back to the life of old Quebec while my eyes dwelt upon the panel opposite to me, the light so fell on it that it revealed the outline of two figures. I sprang up and went nearer; but as I approached the lines vanished, while from the sofa they were still visible. I felt quite sure that there was a picture under the several coats of white paint on the panel; but how to remove them without injuring it was a problem not easily solved. While turning over the question in my mind, I suddenly remembered my friend, Grace

Elverson, who had a studio on D'Auteuil Street near the Glacis. She would certainly be able to help me, and I was soon on my way over to the Esplanade, having concluded to take Grace into my confidence and show her the panel. She was all interest, all attention, a mystery appealed to her as it did to me. On our way back to the *pension* we stopped at a *pharmacie* on St. John Street to buy a certain liquid, which Grace assured me would soften the paint and let us remove it without injuring the picture beneath.

We were soon bending over the panel, Grace carefully applying the liquid upon whose efficacy our success depended. It was a work of time, as the coatings of paint had been hardened by many years. I was impatient to begin the scraping process; but Grace besought me not to touch the panel until her return in the afternoon.

The bright sunlight of an early Septem-

ber afternoon flooded the room when Grace and I began our work of restoration. Slowly, line by line, for it was a task that required no small amount of patience, the picture upon the panel was revealed to us. The figure of a shepherdess leaning against a green bank first appeared, and by some strange coincidence the shepherdess, with the rose-crowned hat and crook garlanded with red roses, bore a striking resemblance to the lady of my dreams. The figure of a shepherd next appeared, a handsome shepherd with a martial rather than a pastoral air, who wore his cloak as if he had a sword beneath it. That face was familiar also, why, I never knew until I met it again in a London gallery many years later.

No restorer, who had brought to light the glories of a Rembrandt or a Van Dyck, could have been more enthusiastic than were Grace and I over our afternoon's discovery.

The picture as it appeared upon the panel, although evidently unfinished, was quite charming. Grace, who was better able to judge of its artistic merits than I, said that it was an excellent example of the Watteau style so much in vogue in the last century, and was doubtless the work of some girl student of the Ursulines, where painting and embroidery were taught. Grace had evidently been studying the art life of old Quebec, and gave her opinion with an air of knowing it all, that pleased me greatly.

"And now," I said, "having done the deed, I must confess to my landlady."

"Bring her up while I am here and let me see the fun!" exclaimed Grace.

Madame Espérance raised her hands in wonder when confronted with the picture on the wall, called upon all the saints to protect her; but had no word of blame for either Grace or me. Indeed, being a shrewd

woman, as well as a pious one, she doubtless felt that our discovery would add to the popularity of her establishment.

When the Abbé C—— called a day or two later, I told him about the panel. His eager interest impressed me with the importance of my *trouvaille.*

"Would you like to see the picture?" I asked.

"Undoubtedly, my child, your description interests me deeply."

I conducted the Abbé to the scene of Grace's and my labors, and drawing aside a table that I had placed before it, revealed the charming picture. The Abbé stooped to examine it more closely, his eyes being the typical near-sighted eyes of the scholar, and as he did so he pressed his thumb against the edge of the panel, when presto, it opened like a door before our eyes. The Abbé sprang back, surprised, almost alarmed. For

the moment, I felt myself so completely under the spell of the past that I should not have been surprised had the evil face of the Intendant Bigot or the beautiful and equally wicked face of Angélique de Meloises looked forth defiantly from the panel.

As it chanced something that had belonged to a far better woman than Angélique lay upon the shelf before us. There, apparently covered with the dust of many generations, lay a packet which proved upon examination to contain a number of pages closely written in a delicate feminine hand. The Abbé eagerly turned over the yellowed pages, devouring the contents of each one at a glance, then placing the manuscript in my hands, he exclaimed: "My dear young lady, you have discovered an historical treasure. In these pages you will find, corroborated by her own testimony, the story of Mary Thompson's romance with Lord Nelson. Of

this sad affair I can tell you something; but here you have documentary evidence. I congratulate you sincerely. This bit of history is yours to make known to the world or to keep to yourself, as you will."

"But you touched the secret spring, Monsieur."

"Granted, but you discovered the picture which drew my attention to the panel and thus the contents belong to you."

By this act of renunciation, Monsieur l'Abbé evinced his true nobility of nature, for what is dearer to the heart of an antiquary than an historical discovery? The good priest completed his generous abnegation by telling me all that he knew about the Thompson family. The father of Nelson's early love, Saunders Thompson, was, he said, a Scotchman and one of General Wolfe's Provost Marshals. Mary Thompson's mother belonged to an old French

family. Having come on both sides of irreproachable lineage, she was fully entitled to enter into the *bonne société* of old Quebec, which she brilliantly adorned, as appears from chronicles of the day, and from some verses written by a poetaster of the time, in which she was likened to Diana.

> "Henceforth Diana in Miss T-ps-n see
> As noble and majestic is her air."

Quoting these verses the Abbé added reflectively, "I never could understand why Davidson looked upon the affair as a *mésalliance,* Captain Nelson himself did not belong to a noble family and he had then by no means reached the summit of his fame as a naval commander."

From the story told in the young girl's diary spread before me, from what the Abbé related to me, and from other sources the little romance of more than a century ago took form in my mind.

CHAPTER II

La Matelote Hollandaise

It was at a dance at the Château that the young Captain of the *Albemarle* met Mary Thompson. The ball was given by the Governor in Nelson's honor, and the rooms were brilliant with uniforms, as officers from the citadel and many government officials, brave in their decorations and orders, were there, as well as the dashing young officers from the *Albemarle* in full regalia.

The fair lady whom Nelson chose to honor and crown as queen of beauty upon this occasion was not Mary Thompson but her cousin, Isabel Frazer. Miss Frazer, who was several years older than Mary and in the full maturity of her charms, was considered by many persons the more beautiful of the two.

By kind permission of Earl Nelson

CAPTAIN NELSON, 1781, AT THE AGE OF 22

From the painting by J. F. Rigaud

LA MATELOTE HOLLANDAISE

Among the dances in vogue in Quebec at that day, were an old English *contre-dance,* a *minuet de la court,* and a popular cotillion called *L'Arlequinade.* After these had all been entered into with great spirit, a *Matelote Hollandaise,* the Quebec version of the Sailor's Hornpipe, was called for. The gay Quebec beauties and their attendant cavaliers stood back while a young ensign, Allan McGregor, at the call of his Captain, stepped forward to execute the intricate figures in which he was well skilled.

"Who will be my partner in the dance?" asked the young sailor, bowing low before the long line of lovely ladies who were eagerly waiting to witness their favorite dance. There followed a rapid buzz of conversation, and a flutter of silken draperies and fans at the end of the line, where Mary stood with her cousin and Captain Nelson. A half dozen girlish voices cried out, "Mary

Thompson will dance with Mr. MacGregor, there is no one in Quebec who can dance *la Matelote Hollandaise* like Mary Thompson."

His Excellency, with whom this bonnie Scotch Mary was a prime favorite, came forward to add his persuasions to those of her companions. Miss Fraser, by no means pleased that Mary should occupy the central position usually accorded her, and too heavily built to enter into the dance herself, exclaimed sharply:

"Surely, Mary, you will not make yourself conspicuous, even to please your friend the Governor!"

Piqued by Isabel's taunt, Mary took a step forward as if about to yield and then held back, blushing, pleased, yet reluctant to accept so prominent a place in the evening's programme until Nelson, bending on one knee before the young girl, held out his

hand to lead her to the floor. Nelson's peculiar charm of manner rendered the action more eloquent than any words that could have been spoken, and yielding to an influence that she had never felt in all her happy but uneventful life, Mary Thompson allowed herself to be led to the centre of the room. A strain of French blood flowed in Mary's veins, as in those of an even more dangerously beautiful Scotch Mary. No sooner did the inspiriting music of the band sound across the room, than all hesitation and timidity vanished, and into the mazes of this most intricate of dances she threw herself with the abandon and coquetry of a daughter of the South. The Governor, who loved his friend Sandy Thompson's beautiful daughter, was at first delighted, and then half regretted the granting of his request. The shy young maid, whom he had been wont to treat like a daughter of his own, had

suddenly bloomed out into an impetuous, passionate woman, a creature of light and motion, whose whole being moved in unison with the inspiring music.

A gown of white muslin, the soft, delicate muslin of India, draped the girl's tall, slender, yet perfectly rounded figure, its clinging folds revealing every graceful line. A single touch of color, a heart of rubies, was hung by a gold chain around Mary's neck and lay like a spark of fire on her snowy breast. Her hair, which was dark and silky, loosened by the motion of the dance, escaped in wayward ringlets upon her neck and brow, and among its shining coils a brilliant crimson rose lived its brief hour of beauty. Before this being of light, motion, and grace, Horatio Nelson stood entranced. The lady by his side made some remark which he did not hear, eyes and ears he had only for Mary as her light form swayed before him;

the only sounds that reached his ears were the rhythmic beat of heel and toe, shuffle and slide of the two dancers as they executed the figures of the *Matelote Hollandaise,* once, twice, thrice, until Allan MacGregor threw up his hands and acknowledged himself fairly beaten on his own ground by the slight girl who danced as if the evening had just begun.

The music ceased, and its stimulating influence withdrawn, Mary blushing and with down-cast eyes allowed herself to be led back to her place by her cousin's side. Compliments were showered upon her; but only two voices reached her ears among the many that surrounded her, that of her father, proud of his daughter's success, yet true to his Scotch instinct of bearing testimony, exclaiming, "Hech, Lassie, I wouldna ha' thought it o' ye to mak' sic' a spectacle o' yoursel'," and then by her side the voice

of the Captain of the *Albemarle,* "Miss Thompson, how can I thank you? I have seen balls in many a palace but never such dancing as yours." Sweetest music were these words to Mary, for the young sailor was the hero of the hour. All the Quebec girls were ready to pull caps for him. A word, a glance, a smile from him was enough to set any of their hearts beating, and here he was bending over her and whispering words of praise in her ears. Allan MacGregor's compliments and solicitations for another dance were scarcely heeded, yet by many of the girls he was thought far handsomer than his Captain.

Although not strictly handsome, even in early youth, Nelson possessed a dignity and air of command that, for some reason, appeals to the heart of a woman more forcibly than beauty of form or feature. Graceful he was and gracious he could be, and

when the somewhat stern features relaxed, the smile that played across them lent to them an indescribable charm. This night Nelson was in full-laced uniform, probably the same that this " prig of a Captain " wore when he made so deep an impression upon Prince William Henry, a few months later. His queue, which was of extraordinary length, and the old-fashioned flaps to his waistcoat, added to the quaint picturesqueness of the youthful figure that bowed before the girl of seventeen, whose only knowledge of the world of romance beyond her own little circle had been gathered from the pages of Fanny Burney's and Mrs. Radcliffe's novels.

" You are warm and tired; rest here and I will fan you," said Nelson, leading Mary to a seat. Later, when he said: " Will you walk with me on the terrace? The air is mild to-night and the moon too beautiful to be

lost," she found herself more than willing to step into fairy-land with the prince by her side.

"Dinna go wi'out your shawl, my lassie," said Miss Thompson, following her niece to the door. Nelson wrapped the light shawl around the girl's shoulders and drew her hand within his arm as they stepped out under the moonlit sky. Nelson and Mary were not alone in seeking the picturesque hillside above the river, known as the terrace, for it was then as in a later time a favorite resort of the young people of Quebec.

The Castle of St. Louis and the great citadel were silhouetted against the blue sky, while the river shone like silver under the light of the full moon.

"A more beautiful spot than this I have never seen!" exclaimed Nelson.

"More beautiful than the famous Castle

at Edinburgh?" asked Mary. "My father thinks there is nothing so fine as that."

"Yes, that is a noble fortress; but this is finer, with the great river winding around its base, and with the Island of Orleans and the Levis shore opposite, and the Castle of St. Louis standing like a bit of the far-off past, and stretching away in the background the heights where English and French valor met. It is good to belong to a people who have won upon such hard-fought fields."

"Methinks, Captain Nelson would always be on the winning side," said Mary, with a shy glance from her dark eyes.

"In battle, yes," exclaimed the young sailor, bending his head until it was on a level with Mary's, "but there are other fields where Nelson would gladly yield and own himself defeated." Mary trembled slightly, said that the air from the river was chill, had they not better turn back, when Nelson,

suddenly remembering that he was talking to a Scotch lassie, and not to a dark-eyed Cuban maid whose only thought was coquetry, adroitly turned the conversation to his own experiences in Southern seas and depicted in glowing colors the part taken by his ship in the rescue of the crew of the *Glasgow* from a burning vessel, until Mary, fascinated by the speaker and entranced by the heroic story in which Nelson had played so conspicuous a rôle, took no heed of the flight of time until an hour had sped away. Then noticing with a start of surprise that the terrace was nearly deserted, she exclaimed, "We must hasten back to the Hall, Captain Nelson. Do you not see that all the others are going? My aunt will be looking for me." Nelson turned reluctantly at the girl's bidding, and as they passed under the shadow of the Château, there arose, attuned to the measured fall of the oars, the

tender refrain of the Canadian boatman's favorite song, borne to their ears upon the still night air:

"Il y a longtemps que je t'aime,
Jamais je ne t'oublierai!"

As the words reached his ear, Nelson turned to Mary and with the fatal charm of manner, that was his in youth as in mature years, he repeated softly in her ear,

"Jamais je ne t'oublierai!"

"It is only the French Canadian boatman's song," said Mary gaily, but with a slight tremor in her voice that did not fail to betray itself to Nelson. "Sometimes, as it sounds across the water, it seems like an echo from the old time when the French ruled here before the English conqueror came."

"And does the French rule seem to you better than the English? Do you regret the coming of the English conqueror?"

"I was not thinking of that. When the old people talk of the past, it seems so full of life and color and gayety, and I love some of the men and women who lived then. Amalie de Repentigny, who entered the Ursulines, was good and true, and so was her lover Pierre Philibert, and his father, the good Philibert of the Chien d'Or, and Madame, the young bride of the Sieur de Champlain, who was so beautiful and so wise that the Indians were ready to worship her as an angel from heaven. It pleased them that they could see their own swarthy faces reflected in a tiny mirror that hung from her bodice, and they were wont to say, in their childlike fashion, that Madame wore their images upon her heart. Did you ever hear that tale?"

"Never, and as you tell it, it is like a poem. If I were a poet like Mr. Cowper or Thomas Gray, I would put your story of

Madame de Champlain into verse and dedicate my lines to you, Miss Thompson. I have no love for the French; but as you talk of them I am almost ready to see some good in them."

"There was much good in them, they did so much for the natives, and Monsieur le Curé tells me that Madame de Champlain learned the language of the Algonquins and would catechise the Indian children. She could talk to them in a way that touched their hearts. They say that the missionaries were fairly jealous of her influence over them."

"I can well believe that the beautiful Madame de Champlain's power over the natives would be greater than that of the missionaries, who are not usually celebrated for their beauty, and who among us, young or old, does not yield to the sway of beauty?"

Although these words were accompanied by a smile of engaging sweetness, Mary was not to be distracted from her subject by compliments.

"And when it comes to valor, Captain Nelson, who will say that your General Wolfe was a whit braver than the Marquis de Montcalm, who fell over there beyond the Château calling upon his men to uphold the honor of France?"

"They were both heroes; I honor them for their bravery," said Nelson, taking off his hat reverently, and holding it in his hand as he looked down from the edge of the precipitous embankment to the river below. "It was while General Wolfe was being rowed by the shore down there that he quoted from Gray's Elegy, and said that he would sooner have written that poem than take Quebec. As the boat glided on through the darkness he repeated to his officers, in a hushed, rev-

erent tone, those lines of Gray's that seem so pathetic to us now:

"'The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour;
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.'

The inevitable hour for Wolfe was the hour of his deathless fame. England will never cease to honor him for the marvelous feat of taking his men and guns up that almost sheer precipice, that I saw from the river to-day. The wonder of it will never grow less and England will not forget it, she never forgets her dead heroes, even if she sometimes overlooks her devoted servitors while they are alive." This last with a tinge of bitterness in his tone, doubtless recalling tardy recognition of his own heroic service in Southern seas. "But even inspired by a leader like Wolfe, there was need of Eng-

lish courage and prowess, to succeed in an enterprise so perilous!"

Mary listened with rapt attention, but when Nelson turned to her, a brilliant smile illuminating his usually grave face, she, perhaps to conceal the emotion caused by his words, tossed her head gaily, and exclaimed, "Ah! you are all English. Here we are a mixed people. I am half Scotch and the other half French; my father tells me when I displease him that I am all French, and for me the lilies of France are as dear as the Scotch thistle or the English rose."

"And yet it is the English rose that you wear in your hair to-night, and surely the rose that blooms in your cheek is the red rose of England."

Nelson noticed that Mary's color deepened as he spoke; but she held her own bravely and making him a courtesy there on

the moonlit terrace, she exclaimed: "That is a very pretty speech that you make to me, Monsieur le Capitaine! Is it with such compliments that English captains are wont to entertain the ladies of the Court of your good Queen Charlotte?"

"Only when inspired by eyes as brilliant as your own, fair lady," was the gallant reply.

"Methinks your compliments savor more of the Court of Versailles than of that of your Queen, a plain German lady, they tell us, not beautiful like the Queen over in France."

"I, being a rough sailor, know nothing of courts or the compliments of carpet knights either in England or France. I can only make my request in plain English and ask you to give me that rose that you wear in your hair, not to remind me of this night and this hour, but to look at when I am far

away and recall these happy days in Quebec."

Again the Canadian boatman's song sounded in their ears from the river below.

"What is that couplet?" asked Nelson. "I can only catch something about a rose."

"Je voudrais que la rose
Fût encore au rosier,"

repeated Mary, holding out the rose, which she had taken from her hair, and then drawing it back. "The old lines say:

"'I would that the rose
Were still on its bush!'

Is not that a plain warning to me not to give you my rose, Captain Nelson?"

"No, no, give it to me; you surely do not believe in omens; I do not."

As Mary, with a pretty show of reluctance, laid the flower in Nelson's hand, Allan MacGregor approached them, sent by Miss

Thompson with a message to her niece for whose return she was waiting.

"Say to Miss Thompson that we are already on our way to the Hall," said Nelson, adding impatiently as he looked at his watch, "it is not late and who would not be tempted to linger here on such a night as this?"

"Who indeed," said the young Ensign to himself as he walked away, "and with a companion as fair as Miss Mary Thompson!"

When Captain Thompson and his family walked home, there being few carriages in Quebec in those days, Miss Thompson was so engrossed with her own comments upon the ball and her satisfaction over the attention paid her at supper by the young Captain of the *Albemarle,* that she did not notice how unusually quiet her niece was, nor did she make any comment upon the length of

her stroll upon the terrace. The good lady, in the course of her remarks, revealed the fact that she had invited Captain Nelson to call at her brother's house. This to Mary's secret delight, while Captain Thompson ejaculated, "Glad you did, Ellen, glad you did! A braw lad he is, on my word, a finer I have seldom seen. Glad you asked him, not that he's like to come either." Mary smiled to herself and silently differed from her outspoken parent.

CHAPTER III

A Rose in the Old Garden

The next morning at the early breakfast, which the thrifty Scotch housewife would have scorned to make later on account of the gaieties of the previous night, Mary announced her intention to begin the decoration of one of the panels in the drawing room. A single wooden panel, which was all that remained of the exquisite French decoration of Madame de Péan's salon, had always vexed Miss Thompson's orderly soul. If there had been two panels, one on each side of the fireplace, there would have been some sense in it, she was wont to say; but a single panel had a lopsided look. The fact that the panel was in reality the secret entrance to a closet did not increase its value in Miss Thompson's eyes.

It was all very well for the French Meloises and Péans to have secret closets, as they were always in danger of being taken prisoners by the English, and needed places for the hiding of themselves and their treasures; but the English and Scotch securely lodged in Quebec had no need of secret traps and doors. For her part, she would like to see the whole thing fastened up and painted over. To prevent this act of vandalism, as Mary considered it, she had persuaded her father, during her aunt's absence from home on a visit, to restore the other panels in the drawing room, promising to decorate them with bouquets of roses which she had learned to paint very cleverly in the Convent School of the Ursulines. The good sisters had taught the girl to draw from nature, a rarer accomplishment then than now. After performing certain household duties, that her aunt

always required of her, Mary sped away to the garden in search of some late crimson roses that grew in a sheltered, sunshiny corner. The day was one of those cloudless September days that often come to Quebec, with a crisp frosty air and a sunshine as warm as that of June, as if the summer sun with lavish hand poured forth his largess of gold as a parting gift to compensate for the long winter that sets in early in these northern climes. Beguiled by the delicious warmth and by her own happy thoughts, Mary lingered long among Miss Thompson's trim borders, stopping to tie up a long stemmed chrysanthemum, or to cut some of the variously colored straw flowers for a winter bouquet, thinking the while of the delights of the previous night. Suddenly she realized, by the sun's mark on the dial, that it was eleven o'clock and that she would have little time for her painting before the

early family dinner. Hastily gathering the few roses left upon the bushes, she turned her face toward the house, when to her surprise directly in her path, as if in answer to her thoughts or as a seeming materialization of her day-dreams, stood the figure of Nelson. He had been standing there watching her some time, how long Mary knew not, and with a mingled feeling of pleasure and of shame, conscious that he had found her thinking of him and quite forgetting that he could not read her thoughts, she turned to him a welcoming face which rivalled her roses in color. Nelson, ever sensitive to the beauty of women, noted every line of the charming girlish figure in virginal white, the roses making a patch of color against her snowy bodice, and the flush on her cheeks seeming to come and go with every breath. To relieve her embarrassment at his sudden appearance, he made haste to explain: "I

came to call upon you and Miss Thompson, and she sent me here to find you. I do not wonder that you linger in this enchanting spot. May I not make my call here? That shaded seat under the hemlocks invites us, and your aunt is evidently so intent upon household matters that she will cheerfully dispense with our company."

"Yes," said Mary leading the way to a garden seat, "I am glad that you like my favorite nook under the trees. I studied my lessons here when I was a school-girl and now I often come here with my book and my needlework."

"To read and to dream dreams?"

Mary blushed, again remembering of whom she had been dreaming that very morning, while Nelson, taking the seat by her side, began to talk of impersonal matters, of Quebec, its people and the French characteristics of the Lower Town, his glance

resting from time to time upon the girl's face, while he congratulated himself upon his lines having fallen in so pleasant a place as this old garden and with a companion so charming.

Mary's eyes were bent upon the flowers in her lap, with which her hands were busied, until her interest in what Nelson was saying caused her to raise them to meet his ardent, expressive gaze.

In the months that followed Nelson always thought of Mary as she looked on that September morning with roses on her lap and roses on her cheeks, a sweet vision of happy and innocent girlhood, before care had touched her tranquil life or her heart responded to the call of his love.

In answer to Nelson's questions, Mary was soon talking quite freely about the old city, relating stories that had been told her by her French Canadian nurse, or by the

good sisters at the Ursulines. This convent, she said, dated back to the settlement of Quebec, having been founded by a pious Norman lady, Madame de la Peltrie, who had brought with her to this small settlement upon the edge of a vast wilderness as a helper, Mère Marie de l'Incarnation, a devout soul, and a practical one as well, who entered with enthusiasm into the work of humanizing and Christianizing the natives, and that in the face of hardships and dangers that few women would have endured.

"I can show you the place under an ancient ash tree," said Mary, "where the good Mère Marie taught the Indian children, and she made them love her so much that they mourned for her when she left them as if she had been their own mother."

"You will take me there some day, and show me the place; and now tell me about

Dollard's heroic stand against the Iroquois at the Long Sault, one of the *habitans* said something about it, yesterday, when we were being rowed around by Wolfe's Cove; but I could not get the gist of it as I am not much of a Frenchman."

"And his French is quite different from the French that you know, Captain Nelson. The *habitans* here speak an odd patois; but that is a wonderful tale, too wonderful for my telling. You must ask Monsieur l'Abbé to relate to you the story of the Sieur Dollard and his companions."

"Nay, he would tell it in French also, tell it to me yourself as the Abbé told it to you, in your own sweet English."

Very simply but with a tremor in her voice that showed how deeply she felt the selfless devotion of the men who gave up their lives to save the French settlements at Quebec and Montreal, Mary told the story

of Adam Dollard, Sieur des Ormeaux, and his brave band of sixteen.

"The Iroquois had vowed that they would destroy the white settlements, and to stop their advance the Sieur Dollard and his companions, knowing that they were taking their lives in their hands, made their wills, confessed, received the Blessed Sacrament and set forth from Mont Reale. On their way to the fort at Long Sault they were joined by forty Hurons and Algonquins. With this small force, the Sieur Dollard held the fort against seven hundred Iroquois, Senecas and Hurons. . . .

The heroic story lost nothing in the disparity of numbers or in aught else at Mary's hands, and when she spoke of the final catastrophe when a grenade that was intended to drop into the enemy's midst struck against the ragged top of the palisade and fell back into the fort, exploding with a

loud report and making sad havoc among its French defenders, Nelson was so much excited by this crowning misfortune that he sprang to his feet and pacing up and down before the little arbor exclaimed, "What courage against odds! Go on, tell me how many were saved."

"Not one, they all perished; but Monsieur l'Abbé says that every man fought as though he had the heart of a lion. The Sieur Dollard was among the first to fall, but the settlements at Mont Reale and Quebec were saved—the savages wanted no more fighting against such foes.

"This new world has been the scene of so many heroic deeds, that it seems as if a great future were in store for it!"

"But you care most for the heroic deeds of the old world, Captain Nelson."

"Yes, because the tales of England's valor by land and sea are the stories that I

heard in my childhood, as you have heard these of your people here. My Christian name comes from "the fighting Veres," Sir Horatio Vere was knighted at Cadiz in 1596, more than twenty years before your Samuel de Champlain came to Quebec. To help to maintain England's supremacy on the sea is the ambition of my life."

From Quebec the conversation naturally drifted away to London, and Westminster Abbey, where English heroism was so honored, and then to St. Paul's, the Tower of London, Richmond Hill, Kew Gardens and other famous places in and around the capital.

"Shall I ever see it all, I wonder?" said Mary, when Nelson paused for a moment, in his rapid, brilliant talk, to pick up one of the roses that she had dropped from her lap, which he asked her to fasten in the lapel of his coat.

"Yes, of course you will see London, you must see it! And when you first go to London, 'may I be there to see!'" said Nelson, quoting from Mr. Cowper's recently published poem. "To be there with you and see your delight in those old places would be the greatest happiness to me. You will like Hampton Court best of all, I am sure. There are so many rooms full of portraits of beautiful women and the gardens are so lovely, and then there is the wonderful vine."

"Yes, my father says that the vine at Hampton Court is as large around as a forest tree."

"Quite as large, and of great vigor, bearing every year as many as 1200 bunches of grapes. The Burnham beeches you would not care for so much, you have such vast forests and fine trees here; but the herds of deer in Bushy Park would please you, and

Pope's old villa at Twickenham is well worth seeing."

"And how I should love to walk along Fleet Street and the Strand and see Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Mr. Boswell following them to take his notes of their conversation."

"How do you know about Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua?" asked Nelson, smiling at the girl's eager interest.

"My father was in London years ago. He went to the Covent Garden Theatre to see Mr. Garrick act in one of his own plays, *The Lying Valet,* I think it was, and Mr. Boswell, who is a friend of my father's, would often take him to the inn, the Cheshire Cheese so they called it, I think, to hear Dr. Johnson and Mr. Garrick talk; but it was the Doctor that did most of the talking, and sometimes, Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great painter, a very elegant gentleman

in a fine mulberry-colored suit, would join them."

"Yes, yes," said Nelson, "the old Doctor is not a fine gentleman; but the great folks are always ready to listen to him because he has something to say."

"And Mr. Boswell, my father said, was always at his side listening to every word and jotting it down in his notebook."

"Yes, Bozzy, as his friends call him, is a rare chronicler, nothing escapes his eyes and ears, and nothing about his pet lion is too trifling to find a place in his notes. He intends to publish them some day—it will be an amusing tale when it appears!"

"I shall surely see Mr. Boswell if I go to London with my father."

"And if I am in London I shall claim you for your first walk along the Strand and Fleet Street, to me the very heart and pulse of the old city, and so on to the

Cheshire Cheese or the Mitre. We might even look through the window and see the old Doctor, seated in his favorite chair at the end of the table, haranguing his devoted admirers. I confess, Miss Thompson, to being too much of a man of action to care for many hours of such talk, but we being outside of the circle shall be free to leave when we are tired, and stroll on to Gough Court, where Dr. Johnson was living when I was last in London."

"And after that where shall we go?" asked Mary with the eager interest of a child listening to a fairy tale.

"We might then cross Fleet Street and walk on by the old round church and stop at the Middle Temple where the benchers dine, and where Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* was played before Queen Elizabeth, and by this time you will be tired of walking in and out among the old streets, and we

shall be glad to sit in one of the seats by the Temple Fountain and see the doves drink from the basin, and watch the ships go by on the Thames below."

A new world seemed to open before the girls' eyes as she listened to Nelson's words. Time sped away on winged feet, until they were reminded of the lateness of the hour by Miss Thompson's approach, with a hospitable invitation to dinner, which Nelson declined with evident reluctance. As he took his leave he promised to avail himself of the good lady's hospitality at a later date. This, it is needless to say, was among the promises faithfully kept by Horatio Nelson. He came often to the house on St. Louis Street.

CHAPTER IV

A Portrait

Several balls followed at which the young people met and danced together, and a dance was given on board the *Albemarle,* which Captain Nelson whispered in Mary's ear was intended for her pleasure, although offered as a courtesy to the ladies of Quebec.

Envy filled many hearts and anger burned in that of Isabel Frazer when Captain Nelson bowed before Mary and led her to the deck to open the ball with him. That Mary, just out of the convent school, whom Isabel looked upon as a chit of a girl, should have been given the preference over her, the acknowledged toast and belle of Quebec, filled her with astonishment as well as anger. Even when the other young officers crowded around Isabel and begged

the honor of a dance she was not appeased. It was not until later in the evening, when Nelson sought her and asked her to dance with him, that the haughty beauty was somewhat mollified.

When Allan MacGregor importuned Mary to dance the *Matelote Hollandaise* with him, as on the first evening of their acquaintance, she declined, said she was too tired to dance, but signified her willingness to walk with him upon the side of the deck where there was no dancing. Here, as they walked and talked, Allan descanted upon the perfections of his Captain, a subject of ever-fresh interest to his companion, as well as to the young sailor.

"Do you know, Miss Thompson," he exclaimed, his boyish face aglow with enthusiasm, "there is not a middy on board who would not go through fire and water for the Captain! He has such a way with him!"

As if Mary needed to be told that!

"And when the younkers, fresh from the school, come on board and he sees them looking with terrified faces at the masts they are expected to climb—and no wonder, they look so tall and so straight—then he has a way of saying to them in a kindly tone, by way of encouraging them, 'Now, gentlemen, I am going a race to the masthead, and I beg I may meet you there.' And away he goes springing into the lee-shrouds, while the frightened younkers squeeze the tar out of the weather-rigging. And then when they meet at the top, as they always do, he heartens them up a bit with some kind of praise or cheer."

"I don't wonder that they love him," said Mary, softly.

"And on our way up here, Miss Thompson, we captured an American schooner that had come out from Cape Cod. The master,

a nice young fellow, no doubt thought he had come to the end of everything; but as we had a bit of rocky coast before us which he knew better than we, and were sadly in need of a pilot, the Captain took him on board the *Albemarle* and got him to help us through. The good fellow served us faithfully, and when he had need of him no longer the Captain called him aft and thanked him heartily for the service he had rendered us, adding, 'It is not the custom of English seamen to be ungrateful, and so, in the name of the officers of this ship, I return your schooner and with it a certificate of your good conduct. Farewell, and may God bless you!' You may be sure that the master of the schooner, Carver by name, was overwhelmed with the Captain's kindness and with the good luck of getting back his vessel."

An even less sympathetic listener would

have found Allan MacGregor's boyish enthusiasm contagious; to Mary it was quite irresistible. She led him on from one incident to another by her evident interest, until the hero of all Allan's stories appeared and claimed her for the last dance of the evening. As he walked off with Mary on his arm, Nelson turned to his young Ensign and said, "Your turn will come later, MacGregor. My duties as host will not permit me to leave the ship, I shall, with Miss Thompson's consent, allow you the great pleasure and honor of waiting upon her and her aunt to their home."

At this moment Miss Frazer, on Mr. Davidson's arm, approached and evidently heard Nelson's words, as the young lady laughed and, turning to her companion, said: "Evidently a family affair; the aunt is to be taken care of as well as the niece."

"A passing fancy, Miss Frazer. Nelson

is a true sailor in his love for the lasses, and doubtless has a sweetheart in every port. He will be leaving Quebec before the affair becomes serious."

"There are some who already consider this a serious affair," replied Miss Frazer. "You may not know it; but Captain Nelson spends all his leisure hours on St. Louis Street, and I have reason to think that my aunt encourages his visits."

Nelson and Mary were not near enough to hear these remarks, but they reached Allan MacGregor's ears and recurred to his mind in the eventful days that followed.

One evening Captain Sandy gave a supper to the officers of the *Albemarle,* and, although no women were present at this feast, Miss Thompson and her niece received the gentlemen in the drawing-room on their arrival. In the half hour before supper was announced Nelson had a few

words with Mary, while the genial host passed from one guest to another, giving each a hearty, if somewhat noisy, welcome. Never had Mary's beauty impressed the young Captain more deeply. Into the girlish face, with its sparkling eyes and softly-rounded outlines, there had entered a thoughtful womanly grace that had not belonged to it when the gay, light-hearted girl had danced the *Matelote Hollandaise* at the Governor's ball. Admiration Nelson had felt for Mary from that first evening, but to-night something more than admiration stirred his pulses. And Mary—could he know what his coming into her quiet life had meant to her?

In the weeks that followed, Mary spent all her spare hours of daylight before the panel that she had begun to paint on the day that Nelson first sought her in the garden. Painting and day-dreaming seemed to be

congenial pursuits, especially as good Miss Thompson held the fine arts in such high esteem that she never talked to her niece while she was at work.

More than once Mary had tried to paint the roses that she had gathered in the garden, but never to her own satisfaction. The flowers upon her panel would not glow with the deep, intense color that they had worn under the warm September sunshine. Again and again she painted them, and as quickly rubbed them out. Finally, having some skill in painting faces and figures, she decided to decorate her panel with a shepherd and shepherdess in the Watteau style. The figures and costumes she copied from a French fan of her mother's, decorating the hat of the dainty shepherdess with some of the red roses that she loved.

As the girl outlined the two figures upon her panel they mingled, all unconsciously

to herself, with her own dreams. The winds were now harsh and cold in Quebec; but Mary, borne upon the wings of fancy, was sailing summer seas and ever by her side was the hero of all her dreams, the young Captain of the *Albemarle*. It is not strange, in this supersensitive and exalted state under the strange new power of love, when, as is natural with higher natures, the spiritual dominated the material, that Mary should have wrought far better than would have been possible under ordinary conditions. Nor is it strange that all unwittingly the shepherdess should have assumed some of the lines of her own figure, while the shepherd, despite the fact that he was clad in Arcadian garments, was the counterpart of the young sailor who was seldom absent from the artist's thoughts.

One afternoon, painting rapidly to make the most of the fast-fading daylight, her

head bent over her work, Mary failed to hear the door open at the end of the long parlor, or the light step that crossed the room. Suddenly a voice at her side exclaimed: "Well done, Miss Thompson! I did not know that you were so good an artist."

"How you startled me!" said Mary, turning to meet the laughing face of Nelson. "Where did you come from?"

"From off the sea, where I belong, fair lady."

"And do you like my picture?" asked Mary, timidly. "You are the first person who has seen it. I keep it covered. My aunt has not even asked to see it. She is to be surprised."

While Nelson was expressing his approval and speaking of certain good points in composition and drawing, Mary, who was standing far enough from the panel to

gain a general view of it, suddenly turning from the picture to the face of her companion exclaimed: "Pardon me, Captain Nelson. I did not know that I was putting your face into my picture. Oh, pardon me."

"Tell me that you painted my face because you were thinking of me, Mary. Tell me that, and you are pardoned at once for this grave misdemeanor." Then, gently drawing her hands away from her blushing face and looking into her sweet, dark eyes, Nelson said, "If I could paint pictures, there is only one face that would look out from my canvas. Like the old masters, one face and only one, the face of the woman I love, should be the inspiration of my art as of my life."

The rich color slowly faded from the girl's face, and, drawing her hands from Nelson's clasp, she turned away from him and walked toward the window.

"Mary, bonnie Scotch Mary, why do you turn away from me? Can't you see, ah! don't you know that it is your face that I would always be painting?"

At this moment, by some unhappy chance, Miss Frazer entered the room, accompanied by two of her friends. Mary advanced to meet her guests, motioning to Nelson to draw a screen across the picture. Slight as was the action, it did not escape the quick eyes of Isabel Frazer, and, crossing the room, she insisted upon seeing what was behind the screen.

"Only an unfinished picture," said Mary. "I cannot allow you to see it, Isabel. It is for my aunt, and I have promised her that she shall see it first."

"Then why was Captain Nelson allowed to see it?" And before Mary could reply to her query she exclaimed, gleefully: "Ah! I have it; it is a portrait of Captain Nelson.

Now I must see it. My criticism will surely be of value to an amateur artist like you, Mary."

Nelson was standing with his back to the panel, his arms stretched out to prevent Isabel's approach while he playfully challenged her to "run the blockade," when Miss Thompson entered the room.

The good lady, on hospitality intent, was followed by a servant bearing a tray of refreshments. In the gay chatter and badinage, incident to the handing around of Miss Thompson's famous home-brewed punch, the picture was forgotten for the time. The ladies declared that they positively could not drink anything so strong as the punch, and then, despite their protestations, fell to and drank it with a right good will.

Captain Nelson gallantly proposed the health of "the fairest lady in Quebec,

where so many are fair"—this last with a low bow to all the ladies, including the Scotch spinster, who accepted the compliment with her very best courtesy. Another toast followed that made Mary's cheek turn pale. Miss Frazer proposed the health of Captain Nelson and a happy and prosperous voyage, adding, "When do you sail, Captain?"

"I cannot say certainly," was the answer. "I have not received my orders yet, but am in daily expectation of them."

After this toast the company was a trifle less merry. When Nelson rose to leave he was only able to say to Mary, as he took her hand, "I came to tell you about this; I shall try to see you to-morrow."

CHAPTER V

The Sailing of the Albemarle

The next day Captain Sandy came home with news of great importance to Mary, which he communicated at their early dinner in the most exasperating manner, between spoonfuls of soup.

"The Captain of the *Albemarle* has received sailing orders," he announced, and then paused to convey a spoonful of soup with great circumspection across the wide expanse made by his portly figure, while Mary waited breathlessly for the next word, which was so long in coming that she finally broke the silence by asking, "What did you say about the *Albemarle,* Daddy?"

"Oh, yes, the *Albemarle,* to be sure, fine ship the *Albemarle!*"

"And what did you say about sailing orders?"

"Yes, yes, to be sure, the Captain has received sailing orders and the *Albemarle* will leave Quebec in two days. Davidson told me the news. He seems anxious to get the ship awa'—why I canna say, unless he thinks it ill for officers as weel as men to be loafing about a town."

"I should think Captain Nelson could stand some loafing after his active service in the West Indies and his long illness," said Mary, controlling her voice with a strong effort.

"And it seems to me that it ill becomes a slip of a lassie like you to be defending Captain Nelson," said Miss Thompson, with a keen, sharp glance at Mary's troubled face.

"Na, na, let the lassie speak; she's like her father and maun speak her mind. After all, she's no far wrang. Davidson has some

notions about descepline that I could never quite agree to." And while her father was explaining a grudge of his own against Alexander Davidson, at considerable length, Mary escaped to her own room. With heavy heart and eyes dimmed by tears, she stood long looking out beyond the Château to the broad river upon which the *Albemarle* lay at anchor.

Could it possibly be, she wondered, could such misery be hers as that the vessel should sail away and she see Nelson no more? Then, repeating to herself as she had repeated many times his parting words of the day before, Mary turned from the window and with eager, trembling fingers dressed for the afternoon, putting on a pale-blue gown, that Nelson had once admired, and clasping the lace around her throat with the ruby pin and pendant she had worn the night she first met him. In a sheltered

corner of the garden she found one red rose, upon the bush that had borne so many that summer, blooming alone, as if for her adornment. Smiling through her tears, she fastened the rose in her hair.

Late in the afternoon Nelson came. Mary, who was in the drawing-room making a pretence of painting, sprang to meet him with a cry of joy. The young sailor's face, which had worn an expression of perplexity and care as he hurried along St. Louis Street, brightened at the sound of the girl's voice. His keen eyes did not fail to notice the pallor of her cheek and the sadness of her eyes. Laying his hand gently upon her arm, he said, "And did you know that I was to sail so soon, Mary, and are you sorry?"

At the touch of his hand and the sound of his voice calling her by her name, which had never sounded so sweet as from Nelson's lips, tears that had been lying near the sur-

face all afternoon suddenly welled up in Mary's eyes and, her love overcoming her natural reserve and shyness, she exclaimed, "Ah! why do you go? What shall I do without you? This is surely the saddest day of all my life!"

"It shall not be a sad day," said Nelson, gently drawing Mary's face to his. "We will make it a glad day. Come with me for a walk on the terrace. Come quickly or Miss Frazer and her friends may appear. The hours are too precious now to be given to strangers. Put on your hat and come with me to the terrace. The rain is over and the sun is coming out for our pleasure."

The idea of a walk upon the terrace where she and Nelson had strolled together the night of their first meeting, and upon many an afternoon since that first evening, seemed so delightful to Mary that it dispelled for the moment the dark shadow of the coming

separation. Quickly drying her tears, she flew upstairs for her hat and coat, and when she returned, equipped for a walk, it was a radiant face that beamed forth from the black hat with its long plumes, a face lit with love and joy which was more beautiful because of the shadows beneath the eyes that added a pathetic sweetness to their brilliancy.

Although the sky had been heavy with clouds all day and there had been occasional light showers, the afternoon sun was shining fitfully when Nelson and Mary walked along St. Louis Street by the Château and down Buade Street by the old home of the good Bourgeois Philibert with its sign of the Chien d'Or, and so on to the steep path above the river.

As they strolled to and fro, or lingered under the shadow of the citadel, Nelson talked to Mary of his past life and of his

hopes for the future, without direct reference to her, yet seeming ever to include her in that future which he outlined in glowing colors.

Mary's eyes, from which all sadness had vanished, danced with joy. The hero, of whom every imaginative girl dreams, had entered her life, and, although she knew not how, she felt that her fate was to be henceforth interwoven with his.

The lovers climbed the steep ascent of the glacis and as they stood together upon the heights by the fortress looking out upon the unrivalled view of mountain, river, and plain, with the picturesque Lower Town below them, the sun, a ball of gold, sank slowly behind the western hills, touching to burnished copper the banks of translucent clouds that hung like a curtain over the fortress and the Levis shore. Off to the north the Laurentian mountains, bathed in

purple light, were softly outlined against the blue of the sky, while some light clouds above them glowed with a pink as delicate as that of an opening rose. Suddenly, as the sunset gun was heard at the citadel, the end of an arc appeared above the town of Levis, the other end of the bow, whose centre was obscured by heavy clouds, hanging like a gay ribbon above the hills near Tadousac. Beneath the roseate glow some boatmen from St. Anne de Beaupré pulled up the river, leaving a shining track in their wake, while upon the still air once more floated forth the melody of the national song, its tender refrain finding a ready echo in the hearts of the lovers:

"Il y a longtemps que je t'aime
Jamais je ne t'oublierai."

To Mary's ears the sad, sweet words seemed to sound the note of coming separa-

tion. She shuddered and turned to her companion a face from which the light and color had faded.

"You are trembling, Mary. There is a sudden chill in the air. There is always a chill when the sun sets. We used to run from it in the West Indies because it brought on the fever. Men who never flinched before the guns of the enemy fled before the threatenings of fever. Here there is no danger of fever, but the evening air is sharp. Take my cloak." Suiting the action to the word, Nelson threw off his cloak and wrapped it around Mary. Still holding the cloak around her, he turned toward her with a look in his eyes that few women could resist, saying, "Ah, Mary, how can I leave you? Come with me! Come to the little church down yonder in the Lower Town, marry me and come with me!"

With Nelson's arm around her, his voice beside her vibrating with tenderness and passionate desire, a whole world of delight was comprised in the words "Come with me." One moment Mary hesitated, then sadly, gently, she drew herself from her lover's embrace, saying, "No, no, not to-day, not without my father's consent. You surely would not ask me to marry you without that?"

"Then you will never marry me!" exclaimed Nelson, impatiently.

"Yes, I will," said Mary, in her firm, soft voice, "if only my father will give his consent."

"He will never consent to your marrying a roving fellow like me. Marry me and ask him afterwards."

"He would never forgive me if I deceived him. You don't know the Scotch; they never forget or forgive. My father

loves me well and yet he would never forgive me."

"Not at once, perhaps, but afterwards when we come back. Ah! who could resist you, Mary?"

"Do not tempt me beyond my strength," said Mary, turning away from the pleading of Nelson's eyes. "Wait until to-morrow, and in the meantime——"

"There is no time like the present. Indeed, there is so little time left."

"Two whole days," said Mary.

"No, only one day, and so much to be done, and Davidson always dogging my footsteps. It was all that I could do to get to you this afternoon. Come with me to the little church, Mary. With you for my wife I can defy Davidson and the whole world!"

"I will go with you to pray for your safety, to pray that we may be happy to-

gether some day; the little votive church has brought blessings to many a sailor, it may bring a blessing to you, dear heart, and to me."

The suffering, that betrayed itself in the girl's voice despite her resolute words, touched Nelson inexpressibly. Young as he was, he had more than once knelt at the shrine of beauty and yielded to the fascinations of women; but never before had he met with one who combined so much charm and tenderness with so large a share of strength and resolution. When this girl, who was little more than a child, said that she would not marry him without her father's consent, Nelson, for the first time in his life, felt that his powers of persuasion might prove ineffectual. As he walked slowly and silently down the rude steps that led to the Lower Town, Mary's hand on his arm, her dear face near his own, Nelson

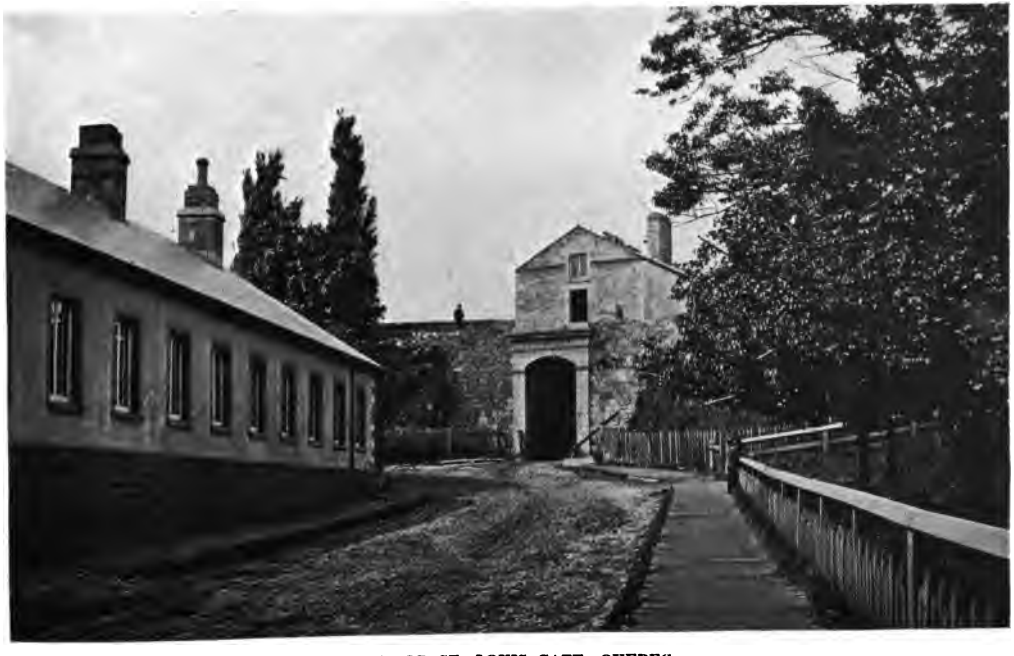
revolved in his mind many plans for the accomplishment of his ends without recourse to Captain Sandy, which, from some words that Alexander Davidson had let drop in the course of conversation that morning, he believed would be worse than useless.

Passing down Côte de la Montagne to the street of Nôtre Dame, Nelson and Mary entered the little church of Our Lady of Victories. Here amid many thank offerings for deliverance by land and sea the lovers knelt reverently, side by side, and offered up their separate petitions, whose burden was the same.

When they were leaving the church Nelson, with Mary's hand clasped close in his, renewed his persuasions, urging her to go with him to the priest's house near by, and brave her father's anger after the knot was tied fast. When, as he thought, she seemed

about to yield to his pleading, Mr. Davidson appeared, at the end of Nôtre Dame Street, and holding out his hand, greeted the young couple cordially, and offered to walk with them up the steep street to the terrace. It did indeed seem as if this man were "dogging his footsteps," as Nelson said, and never did he quit his side until they had reached St. Louis Street, when he said abruptly, "Good evening, Miss Thompson; I leave you within sight of your home. *Au revoir,* Nelson."

"Confounded, blasted impertinence!" exclaimed Nelson, fuming with rage. "As if I were not able to protect you, Mary, and bring you safely to your home!" Then, seeing that his tormentor had turned down another street, he drew Mary along St. Louis Street on toward the Esplanade, renewing his vows of love and urging his suit as they walked. As they neared the old



THE OLD ST. LOUIS GATE, QUEBEC

Gate of St. Louis the moon, which had arisen behind a bank of clouds, shone full upon them, irradiating their faces with ideal beauty.

"Shall I ever see you again, dear love?" said Mary, in a voice broken by sobs. "I know not why, but I feel as if we were parting forever."

"Nay, sweetheart," said Nelson, "you are over-anxious, overwrought by these sudden changes. Take courage and trust me. Remember how the bow of promise overarched us as we stood upon the glacis; believe that it was meant to be a happy omen for our future. We shall meet again to-morrow at the little church. I will send a messenger to tell you at what hour, and now," looking at his watch, "we must part for to-night, as I shall have to see the Governor before I return to the ship."

Drawing Mary aside out of the brilliant

moonlight into the shadow of the old gateway, Nelson clasped her in his arms and kissed her repeatedly upon lips and brow, and then, with her hand in his arm, walked with her to St. Louis Street, where he left her at her father's door.

The girl stood long, watching the retreating figure of the young sailor as he made his way to the Château. Twice he turned back and waved his hand and then disappeared beneath the doorway.

Mary was so much in the habit of coming and going at her own pleasure that her late return called for nothing more than a passing comment from Miss Thompson. The next morning, however, the pallor of the girl's face and the heaviness of her eyes did not escape her aunt's keen glance, who exclaimed, as Mary took her seat at table, "Lassie, lassie, what ails ye the mornin'? I'll ha' to gi'e ye some of my Southern

bark with your father's Holland gin poured over it to put the red color into your cheeks again." Mary protested that she needed no tonics, and as her father looked up from his plate and fixed his eyes upon her, the color mounted to her pale cheeks as if to confirm her assurances.

At the door of the breakfast-room Mary paused irresolute, halting between love and duty, renewing the struggle of the long night. Should she speak to her father and risk his refusal, perhaps his absolute command to break off all communication with Nelson, or should she wait for him to take the initiative and follow where love led the way? As if in answer to her questionings, Captain Sandy's voice broke the silence.

"I hope the lassie's pale face has nothing to do wi' the sailin' o' the *Albemarle*. The Captain's been here a gude deal of late and I saw Mary walkin' wi' him on the

terrace yesterday. She's a gude lassie and I'll say nathin' to her; but I'm glad the ship's goin' soon. I'd never be willin' to see a daughter of mine marrit on a seafarin' man."

These words decided Mary. She slowly turned away and mounted the stairs to her own chamber, whose window commanded a view of the river upon whose bosom lay the *Albemarle*. Was Nelson still on board, she wondered, or was he on his way to her—would he seek her father? She had assured her lover, she had said many times to herself, that she would not marry him without her father's consent, yet this day at any moment a message or a note might come from Nelson asking her to choose between her father and himself; most difficult of all, he might come to claim her final decision. Anxious, unhappy, listening eagerly one moment for the sound of Nelson's footsteps

on the sidewalk, recalling the tones of his voice, the glance of his eye, the touch of his hand, hoping the next that he would not come, the morning passed away.

That October day, when Mary thought of it afterward, always seemed like a dark day, although the sun shone brightly. Captain Thompson came home to his dinner, which he ate hurriedly and in silence, and called back to his sister, as he left the house, that he might be detained at his office until a late hour. Miss Thompson arrayed herself in her best black satin and announced her intention of making calls at the Governor's palace and elsewhere. Would Mary accompany her, she asked.

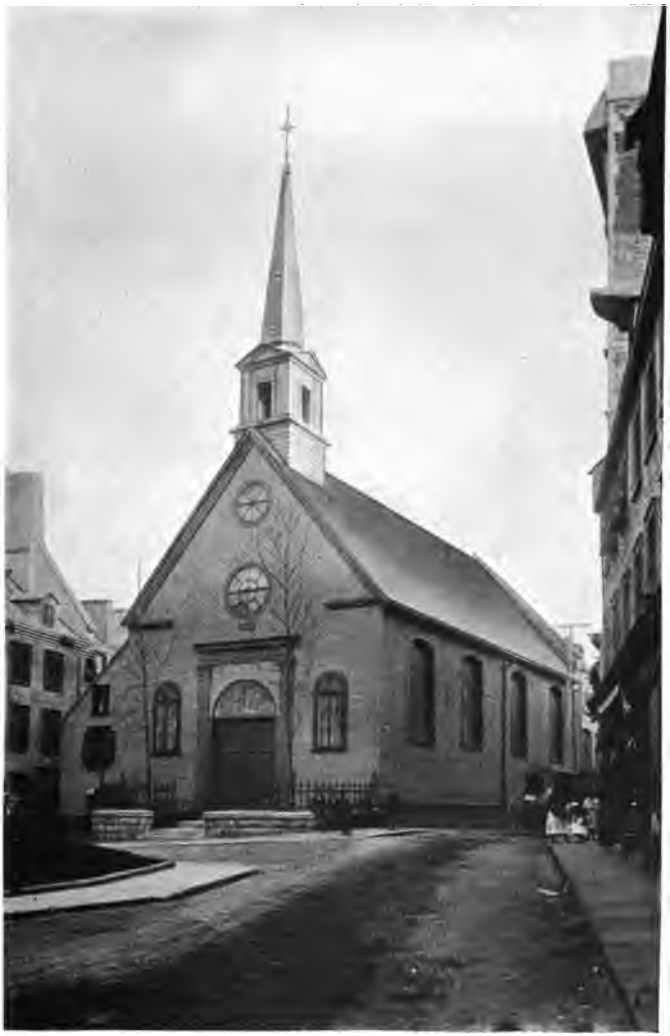
"No, not this afternoon," Mary replied, adding, with a frankness that was a part of her generous nature, "I want to stay at home because Captain Nelson may come to say good-by."

"Weel, my lassie, do as ye woul; but dinna let the handsome lad tak' your heart wi' him."

She kissed Mary with unwonted tenderness, as the girl remembered later, and then, true to her Scotch nature, spoiled everything by calling back, "Dinna break your heart aboot him. He maun ha' a sweetheart in ilka port."

Sad, anxious, almost despairing at Nelson's silence, these words completed the poor girl's misery, and, no longer feeling the need of restraint, she buried her face in her hands and wept the bitterest tears her young eyes had ever shed.

About three o'clock a messenger came with a note. Mary broke the seal hurriedly and there dropped to the floor the rose that she had given Nelson the night of their first meeting. What did it mean? Mary trembled, but, hastily glancing over the



CHURCH OF NÔTRE DAME DES VICTOIRES, QUEBEC

note, she felt reassured. Nelson sent the rose, her gift, that she might have confidence in his messenger. He begged her to meet him at the little church of Nôtre Dame at noon, adding, "I have a plan that will satisfy even your scruples of conscience. We sail to-night. You need send no answer, there is time for none, only come as soon as you can, after this reaches you."

Mary saw with dismay that the note was dated eleven o'clock and it was then after three. Where had it been all these hours while she had been waiting for it? Where was Nelson? He could not have waited for her so long on this busy day of sailing; but he had surely left some one to meet her at the church. Clinging to this hope, Mary donned her hat and cloak and hastened down St. Louis Street and along the steep path to the Lower Town. As she drew near Nôtre Dame Street she saw her cousin

Isabel Frazer come out of a friend's house on Sault-au-Matelot and, fearing that she might join her, Mary quickly retraced her steps along Côte de la Montagne to Sous le Fort and thus gained the church. By making this sudden *détour* the girl all unwittingly missed Nelson's messenger, who had orders to wait near the church until a certain hour. The hour had passed and the sailor was out of sight by the time Mary reached Sous le Fort. She looked anxiously up and down Nôtre Dame Street, and, seeing no one, she entered the church. A few *habitans* were at their prayers, chiefly women, and, kneeling near the door, Mary prayed earnestly for guidance for a way out of the darkness that was gathering around her without loss of love or faith. Was her prayer answered in the way that was best for her in the end? Long the girl knelt in the little church; men and women

came in, crossed themselves, offered their prayers, and went away. How long she knew not. A sudden chill aroused her and, shivering, despite her warm fur wrappings, she looked once more around the now empty church and then went out into the darkness. While Mary slowly and sadly retraced her steps toward her home, and entered the door through which she had passed a few hours before with love and hope in her heart, Nelson paced the deck of his ship under the starlit sky, wondering why she had failed to meet him. His messenger had returned from the church with no word from Mary. Angry and impatient at what he chose to consider her want of confidence in him, Nelson gave his final orders, and, while Mary knelt in the little church of Our Lady, the *Albemarle* spread her sails and winged her flight toward the open sea. That his letter had been delayed Nelson did not know until

months later; why it had failed to reach her earlier Mary never knew. Nelson's friend Alexander Davidson has always had the credit of separating the lovers. Had he had a hand in delaying Nelson's letter? It is certain that Davidson had some inkling of the love affair and thoroughly disapproved of it. Later in the afternoon, when Nelson, repenting of his hasty decision made in the flush of anger, prepared to anchor off the Island of Orleans and go back to Quebec, ostensibly to attend to some neglected business, but really to see Mary and have an explanation from her, it was Alexander Davidson who interfered and finally prevailed upon the young sailor to continue his course.

In all the weeks that followed Mary waited in vain for a letter or message from Nelson. She felt quite sure that a letter had been written which had failed to reach

her. That Nelson could have forgotten her seemed impossible, his face, his voice, his every word and gesture being so fresh in her own mind. She had only to shut her eyes and see him again, as he looked on that September day when he suddenly stood before her in the garden. One dark day in November, when Mary's own heart seemed as desolate as the garden itself from which every leaf and twig of summer green had disappeared, she recorded in her diary:

" To-day I looked at the panel I had been painting, the first time since—— Aunt Ellen came in, without my hearing her, and stood by my side. When she said that it was beautiful and a fine likeness, I could bear it no longer, and, filling my brush with white paint, I drew it across the face—shall I ever see that dear face again? "

Thus was fulfilled the sad foreboding of final separation that had distressed Mary

when she and Nelson had stood upon the moonlit hill above the church, and thus, through the carelessness or unfair dealing of a third person, and the irresolution of an hour, there passed from the life of the brave and gifted Nelson the sweetest and purest of human influences. Great victories were to be his, great honors and moments of supreme exaltation; but never in a life that was destined to touch the summit of earthly glory did there dawn for Horatio Nelson happier hours than those spent with bonnie Mary Thompson upon the terrace at Quebec, or when kneeling by her side in the little church of Our Lady of Victories.

PART II

IN LONDON

What made th' Assembly shine?
Robin Adair.
What made the ball so fine?
Robin was there;
What when the play was o'er,
What made my heart so sore?
Oh! it was parting with Robin Adair.

CHAPTER VI

In London

As the weeks lengthened into months and the months into years Mary's heart often failed her, as on that dark November day when she drew her brush across Nelson's portrait, and yet she never gave up entirely the hope of seeing him again. Sometimes when she stood on the crest of the hill above the Lower Town and looked out upon the St. Lawrence, she could almost fancy that she saw the *Albemarle* riding at anchor upon its broad breast as in the happy days when she and Nelson had walked upon the terrace together. In these years many suitors sought her hand, but to all she turned a deaf ear. Once when her aunt remonstrated with her upon her indifference to an especially eligible *parti* Mary turned to

her so sad a face that the good lady never again spoke to her of love or lovers, hoping always that time would heal the wound that she realized was still open.

Those were the days when news came to Quebec at long intervals. Men read the journals of the day at the coffee-houses and discussed them there. Captain Sandy not being of an especially communicative nature to the women of his family, Mary heard little news of the great world in which she now felt so keen an interest. From a stray journal sent to her she learned that Nelson had been appointed to the *Boreas*. This particular passage was marked, but the address was in a handwriting that was quite unfamiliar to her. Of an important event which occurred a few months later, Captain Nelson's marriage to Mrs. Nisbet, she knew nothing.

It was not until five years later, and in the

London of which she and Nelson had talked so often, that Mary found the sequel to her own story. Business of importance having called Captain Thompson to the capital, he proposed to take his daughter with him. The thought of being in London, perhaps in the same city with Nelson, filled her with joy. The long and tedious voyage seemed as nothing to her, every day bringing her nearer to her heart's desire.

One morning, soon after Mary's arrival in London, while strolling with her father through the gardens of Hampton Court, marvelling over their beauty and thinking of Nelson's description of them, a face and figure intimately associated with him suddenly appeared before her and a familiar voice exclaimed:

"Miss Thompson, what a pleasant surprise to see you here!"

Mary turned to meet Allan MacGregor's

frank blue eyes and a face which, although still youthful, almost boyish, had gained much in character and expression in the years since they had met.

"I only came to London yesterday and by a great good fortune I meet you and Captain Thompson on my first day here."

"You came to London yesterday," said Mary, returning Allan MacGregor's greeting; "you and Captain Nelson?"

"No, he stopped for a few days in Bath with his family. His father is very ill and longed to see his son again. But it is Commodore Nelson now, and there is to be a reception and ball given in his honor when he comes to London."

"True enow," said Captain Sandy. "I saw somethin' aboot it in the paper this mornin'."

"Why did you not tell me that, father?"

"There is so much to see and talk about

here in Lunnon town," replied Captain Sandy, evasively, "and why should a lassie like you be fashed aboot the doings of a great high Commodore of England?"

"For old times' sake and Quebec days Miss Thompson may well be interested in honors paid to Commodore Nelson," said Allan MacGregor, noticing the wave of pleasure that swept over Mary's face.

"I'd like weel enow to see the festeevities mysel'," said Captain Sandy.

"And so you shall," said Allan. "I shall be happy to make arrangements for you. If I may have the honor of waiting upon you and Miss Thompson at your lodgings to-night, I may be able to tell you something more definite of Commodore Nelson's movements and the date of the ball, as I am expecting to find a letter from him at the Admiralty Office, where I have an engagement this afternoon."

"You're ower gude," said Captain Sandy, giving Allan his address, No. 7 Craven Street, while Mary said, "And you, Mr. MacGregor, have you not been promoted also?"

"Yes, thanks to the Commodore's influence, I have a ship of my own now. He is never so happy as when he is doing something for his friends."

"One only needs to know him to be sure of that, Captain MacGregor," said Mary, with an emphasis on the unaccustomed title, and a smile of congratulation whose radiance sent him on his way wondering if in all the world there were a woman as charming as Mary Thompson.

That same evening, while looking over a paper that her father had left on the table in their little parlor, Mary was attracted by seeing Nelson's name in large letters at the top of a column, and below "Commodore

Nelson and his lady," with some mention of their movements, she knew not what. Could it be that Nelson was married? Surely the words, " Commodore Nelson and his lady," could mean nothing else. The cruel words danced before her eyes, the room revolved around her and then a blackness of darkness enveloped her and she knew nothing more until she heard her father's voice, which sounded faint and far away, calling to her with unwonted tenderness in his tone, " Mary, my lassie, what ails ye? Mary, my own lassie, open yer e'en and speak to me."

Something that Mrs. Maidment, the landlady, gave her to smell, and some wine or brandy that she made her swallow, revived her at last, and her father and Mrs. Maidment helped her to the lounge, where she was thankful to bury her head in the cushions and so lie there, her eyes closed, feigning sleep. Captain Sandy tiptoed around the

room in his clumsy man's fashion, telling Mary to sleep one minute, and the next taking her hand in his, feeling her pulse, and telling her that they must now change all their plans and leave London at once for Scotland, as it was quite plain that London did not suit her. The bracing air of Scotland would soon set her up again. Mary protested against any change of plans, said that she could be quite well after a night's sleep, and that she was still feeling the fatigue of the long voyage. Her father shook his head, said that it would never do to have her ill on his hands here in London; she would be much better off among her Scotch relatives. In the midst of this discussion Mrs. Maidment brought up Allan MacGregor's card, which proved a welcome diversion, for while her father was downstairs with his visitor Mary was able to rest upon her cushions and think her own

thoughts. She had a very strong feeling in her own mind that she would not like her Scotch relatives. To stay in London as long as possible was her wish, to see Nelson again, whatever pain there might be in such a meeting, and to hear from his own lips the explanation of his long silence. That he could have been untrue to her Mary would not for a moment believe, being so true and loyal herself. There had been, she was sure, some misrepresentation, some interference by a third person. To hear this from him would set her mind at rest. It might not mean happiness, but it would justify her in her large faith in him. Such an explanation from Nelson himself would, she felt sure, take away the wretched feeling that now quite overwhelmed her, a feeling that all the foundations in life had suddenly given way. Turning over these thoughts in her mind and wondering how

and when she could see Nelson, thinking one moment that she would ask Captain MacGregor to help her and realizing the next that she could not endure the idea of confiding in anyone, least of all in a friend of Nelson's, Mary lay back among her cushions, while Mrs. Maidment sat by the table knitting busily and rambling on of courts and court ladies whom she had waited on, all in an even, monotonous tone. That Mary only answered by an occasional yes or no seemed to make no difference in the flow of the landlady's eloquence. Mrs. Maidment had taken a liking to her American lodgers at once. She was wont to say, with ready mother wit, that the Americans who came to London were more than half English after all, and she for her part was glad that the war was well over, and that none of her people had been engaged in it. She took great pride in telling Mary how many

distinguished Americans had stopped in her house, Dr. Franklin among them. After repeating one of his witticisms or racy stories, she always expressed surprise that Captain Thompson and his daughter disclaimed all knowledge or acquaintance with the distinguished diplomat, her idea of America being as limited as that of most English people of her time; the great distance between Quebec and New York or Philadelphia being something that her mind quite failed to grasp, even when it was carefully explained to her. There was a lady, she said, who sometimes came with her husband to see Dr. Franklin; she was not beautiful, but very clever and quite English in her way of speaking; her name was Mrs. Adams; Miss Thompson must know her, as she came from Boston, which, she believed, was quite near Quebec. Perhaps she was still

in London and would be at the ball next week.

"What ball?" Mary asked, trying to show some interest in the landlady's conversation to make amends for her ignorance of the great folk of whom she talked.

"The ball in honor of Commodore Nelson and his lady, to be sure," was the reply. "You and your father will be going, Miss Thompson, all the great people will be there, maybe the Queen herself; but they say that Her Majesty has no great fancy for balls and routs, especially now that the King is ill and away from her."

Yes, Captain MacGregor had spoken of a ball to be given in Nelson's honor. That would be her opportunity, and, making a great effort, Mary aroused herself, said that she and her father were to have an invitation to this ball, and would not Mrs. Maidment help her to find a dressmaker who would

make her a gown suitable for so grand an occasion?

Mrs. Maidment welcomed Mary's suggestion with delight. She had, according to her own account, assisted at the toilettes of many great ladies, and she naturally knew the best London dressmakers. She would take Miss Thompson to one on Old Bond Street who advertised the Duchess of Devonshire as one of his patronesses. No greater lady could be found in all England than the beautiful duchess, who had just helped Mr. Fox to carry his election. Captain Thompson, who opened the door quietly, expecting to find his daughter asleep, was surprised to see her sitting up on the lounge, discussing the latest London fashions with Mrs. Maidment. He patted her on the shoulder, said that he was glad she felt better; but, noticing the bright spot of color on her cheek and the feverish

warmth of her hands, he insisted that she should go to bed at once, adding that it was his firm belief that a woman would talk about the set of a hoop or a turban, or a kerchief with her latest breath.

To this Mary replied that her father would surely wish her to do him credit at the ball to be given on the fifteenth. "Certainly," assented Captain Sandy. "MacGregor says that the invitations will be oot the morrow. I want you to haud your ain wi' the best, my lassie, but now you are tired and need rest," and then, turning to Mrs. Maidment, "Will ye kindly look after her a little, ma'am, and dinna let her talk. She's not generally a chatterbox, but the grand doings of Lunnon town have fair turned her heid."

"Little does he know what has turned my head," thought Mary, as she thanked Mrs. Maidment and bade her good-night,

after promising to stay in bed the next morning unless she felt quite like herself. After a night of fitful sleep and dreams of walking on the hillside at Quebec with Nelson, dancing with Allan MacGregor, and talking to them both in the garden at Hampton Court, the morning found Mary so weary and unrefreshed that she was more than willing to spend the day on the lounge in the little parlor.

CHAPTER VII

An Unexpected Encounter

Some flowers, lovely June roses, from Allan MacGregor, came up to Mary with her breakfast tray, and later he called himself to inquire after her health, sending by her father offers of service and urgent entreaties to save her strength in order to be well enough to enjoy the ball on the evening of the fifteenth.

"I hope to be quite well long before the fifteenth. Indeed, nothing ails me now," said Mary, her pale face and heavy eyes belying her words, and then turned her face to the wall and did not speak again until Mrs. Maidment brought up her luncheon.

Finding Allan MacGregor's roses withering upon the table, the landlady gathered them together and put them in water, try-

ing to draw Mary's attention to their beauty, wondering at her languid admiration of them, and still more at her apparent indifference to the handsome young sailor who had brought them. Mary's interest was only awakened when the coming ball was the topic of conversation, and again Mrs. Maidment wondered, saying to herself, "She's not the kind of a young lady who thinks of nothing but balls and routs and fine gowns. It must be that she's expecting to meet some one at the ball that she likes better than the young Captain." Having made up her mind to this, the keen landlady observed her lodger with great interest, and that evening, when Mary claimed her promise to take her to the famous dressmaker of whom she had spoken, she was quite sure of the correctness of her surmise.

The girl's strong will happily came to her rescue, and her pride as well. She was

determined to go to the ball and to look her best; Nelson should not see her, for the first time after all these years, looking like a simple country maid. Her father gave her *carte blanche* with regard to expenditures; she would be "braw and fine with the lave," as he expressed it. So thought Mary, the next morning, as she looked over satins and laces at the establishment of the famous *couturière* on Bond Street, where she, after much consultation with Mrs. Maidment and some qualms of conscience anent the price, chose a rich white silk brocaded over with crimson roses.

"Fit for a duchess!" exclaimed Mrs. Maidment, holding up her hands in wonder and admiration.

"And the young lady will look like a duchess in it," said the tactful Madame, as she pinned and fitted. "Are all American ladies beautiful?" she inquired, looking at

Mary from all sides and studying effects. "There was an American lady over here, a Mrs. Jay. I saw her at the grand opera once in Paris. The whole house rose when she entered, they took her for Queen Marie Antoinette. She was a rare beauty, that Mrs. Jay; perhaps the young lady knows her. She lives in America, in New York." Mary blushed at the compliment paid to American beauty, in which she was so generously included, and disclaimed acquaintance with Mrs. Jay, of whom she had never even heard.

Madame assured her customers that she had a great many gowns in her workroom for the grand ball. Mrs. Nelson had been in earlier in the day to try on the costume that had been ordered for her. If the young lady had come a half hour sooner she would have seen her, a sweet little woman, but without the air and style of the American

ladies, and quite different from the Commodore, who, with all his sociability and friendliness, impressed one, at a glance, as being a great person.

Mary surprised the voluble Madame by telling that she knew the great man herself, and, the fitting being ended, she was glad to escape to the street. She begged Mrs. Maidment to take her to a glove shop and then leave her to her own devices, as she knew the way back to Craven Street, and was longing for a stroll in the sweet freshness of Green Park.

A half hour later, when she was turning from Bond Street into Piccadilly, Mary saw a little boy of three or four escape from his nurse and run into the street just as a coach and pair dashed around the corner. Quick as thought Mary flew across the street and, at the risk of her own life, dragged the child away almost from under the horses' hoofs.

"Bravo!" exclaimed a voice from the coach. "My man did his best to stop his horses, but you, Madam, were just in time to save the child!" This as the occupant of the carriage stepped upon the pavement. "I trust that he is not injured, or you!"

Recognizing the voice as that of Nelson, Mary was so overcome by the sudden joy and pain of seeing him that she turned away her face to conceal her emotion, while Nelson bent over the now screaming child, examining him carefully, saying the while in a gentle, soothing tone, "Now, now, my little man, you are more frightened than hurt, and you, Madam," to Mary, whose face was still turned from him, "I trust that you have sustained no injury; your child seems to be safe and sound. I have been ill so often that I am about half a surgeon myself; but if it would make you feel more comfortable to have your child see a medical man, my

carriage and my services are at your disposal."

"The child is a stranger to me. I happened to be quicker than the little fellow's nurse, but I am most thankful that he is uninjured," said Mary, raising her eyes to meet those of Nelson.

"And you," he said, passing his hand over his eyes as if awaking from a dream, "you are quite sure that you are not injured?"

Then, as if the years that lay between their last meeting and this had been swept away like the fabric of a dream, "Mary, Mary! To see you again and here in London! To hear your voice once more! But you are ill, faint from the shock; let me take you to your home," and, suiting the action to the words, Nelson almost lifted Mary into his coach. The little boy, now quite re-

covered from his fright, called out that he wished to be taken home in the coach also.

"So you shall, my little man," said Nelson. "Miss Thompson, this lady who saved your life, will take you home in the coach."

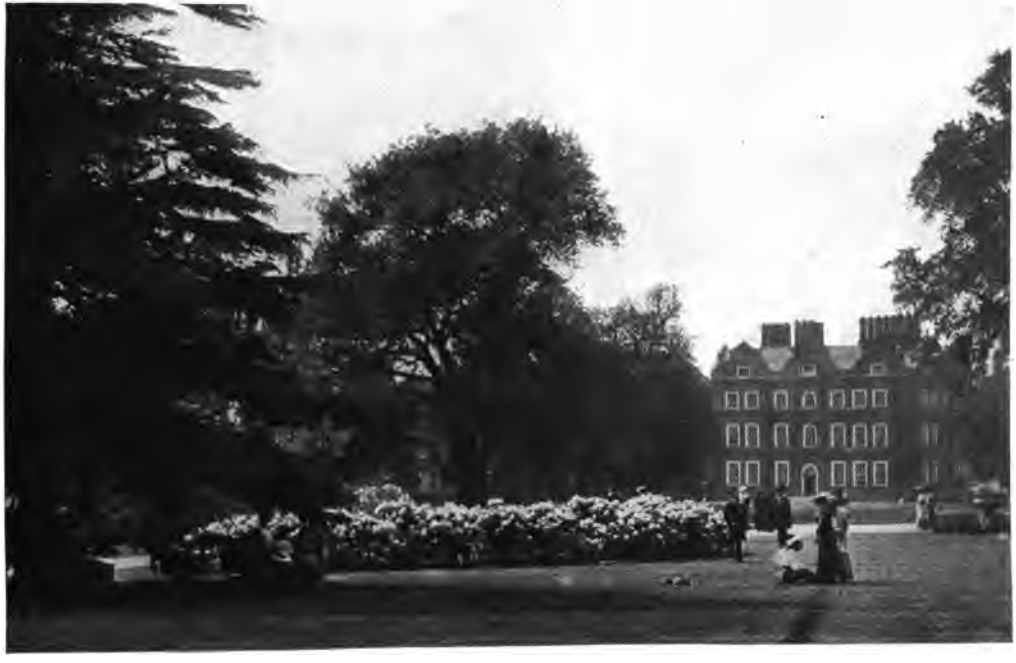
The maid explained that this was quite unnecessary, as the child's home was near by in Piccadilly, but the boy, a perfect cherub, with blue eyes and golden hair, evidently quite accustomed to having his own way, refused to go with his maid. Fascinated by Nelson, as children always were, and charmed by a brilliant decoration that he wore, the boy clung to his hand and insisted upon being taken home in the coach.

"I hope you do not object," said Nelson, placing the boy beside Mary, and taking the number of the house.

"Oh, no!" said Mary, putting her arm around the child; "and he is such a darling, it is a pleasure to do anything for him."

Charming as the child was, Nelson had eyes and ears only for Mary. He looked at her as if he could never have enough of her beauty and sweetness, as if still fancy free as in the old Quebec days.

Then, noticing her embarrassment under his gaze, he drew her attention to several places of interest on their route, and questioned her about her aunt and her father. On learning that Captain Thompson was in London, he said that he would stop at their lodgings and see him. Having left the little boy at his home, Nelson said they would have a drive together; he must see Mary and talk to her after all the years since they had met, and so, paying no heed to her remonstrances, he gave the order to drive toward Kew Gardens. He wished that he could take her to all the interesting places that they had talked about; but his business at the Admiralty settled, and a ball



KEW PALACE AND GARDENS

that was to be given in his honor well over, he was forced to leave London with Mrs. Nelson, whose lungs were affected by the smoke. But Mary and her father would come to the ball; what had seemed to him a tiresome affair would take on it a new interest if she were to be there. He would have invitations sent at once. Here Mary found space to answer that she and her father had already had invitations sent them by Captain MacGregor.

"And you have seen MacGregor, and he never told me that you were here. I saw him at the Admiralty yesterday, but only for a moment."

Of all that was said during the drive to Kew, and during a long and earnest conversation, when Nelson and Mary walked together under the trees in the garden, she made no record in her diary, and only twice did she speak of it: once to Allan Mac-

Gregor that same evening, under the stress of strong emotion, her heart being stirred to its depths by the unexpected events of the day, and once again, later on, when she bade farewell to Allan before leaving London.

When Allan MacGregor stopped at the Thompsons' lodgings that evening, as it had become his almost invariable habit to stop of late, he greeted Mary with a note of anxiety in his voice, which might well have been caused by the unusual pallor of her face; but when he said, "I hope you have suffered no ill-effects from the accident," she exclaimed:

"How do you know anything about what happened to-day? There was no accident."

"No, unless you have sustained some injury in your effort to save my small nephew from the hoofs of Nelson's horses."

"Your nephew?"

" Yes, my sister Lady Herbert's only son. I stopped in to dine with her this evening and heard about little Roland's rescue. The maid remembered your name, and from her description of the beautiful lady I felt quite sure that you were the Miss Thompson. But tell me that you are quite well. You are pale to-night; but the shock was quite enough to drive the color from your cheeks."

" It is all so strange, so wonderful. I was glad to help the dear little boy and I am now more than glad when I know that he is your nephew. That the carriage should have been Captain Nelson's and that I should have seen him and talked to him again, and, stranger than all, that I should be talking to you about it now——" Mary's cheeks were no longer pale, but rosy red, as she said this.

" Nay, nay, it is not strange; it is quite natural that you should talk to me; you and

I are Nelson's best friends. I have often longed to break the silence, to say some word that would explain his position that last day in Quebec."

"He told me himself," said Mary; "but what he does not understand is who delayed the letter that should have reached me at noon. He says that it was Mr. Davidson who urged him to sail; but, as he was with him from the time that he sent off the letter by his own trusted messenger, until a few minutes before noon when he set out to meet me at the church, he cannot see how Mr. Davidson could have intercepted the letter, and then he says that he is far too honorable a man to have acted in a manner so underhand."

"Now perhaps I can throw some light on that. I was sent off on business that occupied the entire morning, but before I left the ship I saw Captain Nelson give a letter

to one of his most trusty men, little Gray, and, as I was going in the same direction, I watched him as he ran along Petit Champlain and up Mountain Hill. At Port Dauphin, Gray was stopped by a lady. As I was some distance behind him I cannot say who it was, especially as she wore a thick veil. She was about your height; indeed, I thought it might be you. They were still talking together when I turned up St. Anne Street and so lost sight of them."

"My cousin, Miss Frazer, of course!" said Mary, in an agitated tone. "Why did I never think of this before? She and I are said to look alike; the boy evidently mistook her for me and gave her the letter which was for my hands alone, and she kept it until afternoon."

"Yes, and little Gray went back to the ship and told Nelson, in good faith, that he had given you the letter."

"And I never received it until three o'clock!"

"Captain Nelson was waiting for you at the little church from noon until nearly three o'clock. From the terrace by the Château where I had been sent with papers for the Governor to sign, I saw him pacing up and down before the church."

"I know now why my cousin avoided me so carefully in the days that followed the sailing of the *Albemarle*. I knew that Isabel was very angry with me; but I never dreamed that she could stoop to so dishonorable an action as to hold back a letter intended for another person."

"But what could have been Miss Frazer's motive? What had she to gain?"

"A salve to her wounded vanity. She resented Captain Nelson's giving me the first place which had always been hers, and then she was glad to do something to please Mr.

Davidson. They were great friends; I thought Isabel would marry him; but something has come between them."

"It looks indeed as if they had worked together to get the Captain off without seeing you again."

All unconsciously Nelson's two friends had fallen back into calling him by the title by which they had known him in earlier days. When Allan bade Mary good-night, he said: "It is a strange tale and it is hard for me to believe that a woman as beautiful as Miss Frazer, and one who is related to you, could be so false. Fair and false!"

"Nay, do not say that. Isabel yielded to a sudden temptation. She has doubtless repented of it long since. A hot temper and inordinate vanity are her besetting sins. But why should we dwell upon this miserable coil? It is all over and Nelson is happily married."

"Yes, he seems to be happy; but—well, I shall not prophesy. Mrs. Nelson is a sweet, motherly lady; but with all her good qualities I doubt whether she is the woman to hold the affections of the ardent, impetuous Nelson. He has a great future before him. I may be mistaken, but I doubt her ability to enter into all that that future may hold."

"I trust that you are mistaken," said Mary, raising her beautiful eyes to Allan's, "for Nelson's happiness will depend upon the woman whom he loves, and his happiness is dear to both of us."

With this the conversation ended, as Captain Sandy joined his daughter, and he and Allan were soon discussing political questions in England, the very alarming condition of affairs in France, and Mr. Charles Fox and his last speech in the House.

Although Mary certainly wished Nelson

to be happy, as she had said, she would have been less than a woman had she not found some satisfaction in Allan MacGregor's rather mild admiration of Mrs. Nelson.

The next morning Lady Herbert called upon Mary and, as Allan said afterwards, the two women fell in love with each other at first sight, which he did not wonder at, Mary being Mary, and Lady Herbert, quite aside from the fact that she was his sister, being one of the most charming young widows in all London.

"I shall not attempt to thank you, Miss Thompson, for all you have done for me and mine," said Lady Herbert, taking both of Mary's hands in hers. "It would be impossible to express my thanks and so I shall not even try."

"No, pray do not, Lady Herbert. What I was able to do for your dear little boy was such a very great pleasure to me that

I am glad you will not spoil it all now by thanking me."

"No, but you must make me a promise," said Lady Herbert, raising her wide-open blue eyes, so like Allan's, to Mary's face. "You must promise to call upon me if there is anything I can do for you in London or in all England."

"You can do something for me very soon," said Mary, laughing. "You may send me some one to dress my hair properly for the ball."

"Gladly!—but is there not something more—ribbons, laces, fallals?"

"No," Mary assured her, "the landlady has been most helpful, and Madam G. has supplied everything requisite for my toilette."

"If Madam G. has you in hand, everything will be quite *à la mode*. There being no shopping to be attended to, will you not

drive with me in Hyde Park this afternoon, and may I take Roland with us? He talks incessantly of the 'pitty Merican lady,' having quite lost his heart to you, Miss Thompson, which is doubtless no novelty to you, he being one among many."

CHAPTER VIII

The Great World

Mrs. Maidment was quite assured of the correctness of her surmises when on the night of the ball she witnessed Mary's delight over a box of red roses that came for her with a card that she read and re-read many times. The card was pasted in Mary's diary afterwards, and on it was written, "Some English Roses for the Rose of Quebec." The clever landlady was quite correct in thinking that these roses came from a suitor more favored than the young captain. The latter brought his flowers himself when he came in the afternoon with a message from his sister, explaining, in his frank boyish fashion, that so many flowers were being sent out that he thought it safer to deliver them in person, adding, "I beg that you

will do me the honor to carry some of my roses, Miss Thompson, even if you have a dozen other bouquets, which is more than likely."

"Your lovely roses will doubtless be all that I shall have, Captain MacGregor, and I should certainly carry them, even if I had twice a dozen bouquets."

Mary carried Allan's flowers, red roses also, as she had promised, but it was from Nelson's box that she chose a cluster for her corsage and another for her hair. These last she insisted upon wearing, although the coiffeur whom Lady Herbert had sent to arrange her hair would top off the pyramid, which he had reared upon her head, with some fine white ostrich feathers. "No lady of quality," he asserted, "would venture to appear at a ball without ostrich feathers in her hair."

It was a court lady decked out in the latest fashion of the day, except that she

would have no powder on her hair and no rouge on her cheeks, who spread out her full brocaded skirt and courtesied before Lady Herbert and her brother when they called for her. Stately and handsome she was, Allan admitted, fairly dazzling in her beauty, but in his secret heart he preferred Mary in the simpler costume which she usually wore.

Captain Thompson held up his hands in surprise and wondered what had become of his country lass. Then, fairly bedazzled by Lady Herbert's blond beauty, which was well set off by a black velvet gown and some rare family pearls, he said that he was glad indeed that MacGregor was with him to aid him in the protection of such youth and beauty.

Captain Sandy, in his ancient uniform which Allan had insisted upon his wearing, as this was an evening when heroes were to

be honored, was a picturesque figure, and Allan himself, in his Captain's uniform, was, as Captain Sandy said, "a braw callant," and handsome enough, his sister thought, to win the heart of any maid whose heart was not already won.

When the party set forth in their chairs, which with footmen and torches had been waiting for some time on Craven Street, Mrs. Maidment watched them from her door with a proud consciousness that she was once more in her element, entertaining within her gates court ladies and gentlemen of high degree.

In the ballroom Lady Herbert found seats for her party quite near the Duchess of Devonshire. This celebrated peeress although now past her first youth, was still beautiful as a dream. To-night she was resplendent in sky-blue velvet and diamonds, with her hair rolled high, although with less

elaboration of puff, powder, and cushion than in earlier years, when an anonymous poet had, in limping verse, besought her—

> "From her cumbrous forehead to tear
> The architecture of her hair."

The neck beneath, be it said, was quite as fair as when the same poet likened it to the snowy plume that waved above her beauteous brow.

Mary was speedily carried off by Allan for a promenade or a dance, and, as Captain Sandy was waylaid by Mr. Boswell and some of his friends as he entered the room, Lady Herbert and the Duchess were left to enjoy a *tête-à-tête* together.

"Pray tell me something about the handsome girl who entered the room with you, Lady Herbert," said the Duchess. "Your brother has been dancing with her, and now he and Commodore Nelson are both devot-

ing themselves to her. She is charming and dances divinely!"

"Miss Thompson, an American lady, your Grace; Commodore Nelson and Allan met her several years since, when they were in Quebec with the *Albemarle.*"

"Fancy such grace and beauty coming from that new country!"

"My brother tells me that the American women are very beautiful. Your Grace may remember that Captain DeLancy and other young officers succumbed to the charms of the New York and Philadelphia girls during the war, and Sir Henry Johnson married an American girl, Miss Franks, who was a favorite toast with Sir William Howe and his officers. She is, I believe, a wit as well as a beauty. Ah, there she is on the other side of the room, talking to Mr. Fox,—the dark-haired woman in crimson velvet and diamonds."

"Rather too much of the Jewish type to please my fancy," said the Duchess, raising her lorgnon. "I much prefer your Quebec beauty. Mr. Boswell is being presented to her now by the old gentleman in the quaint uniform."

"That is her father, Captain Thompson, who was one of General Wolfe's Provost Marshals; he is a character in his way, and the girl herself is as spirited as she is beautiful," said Lady Herbert, entering upon a graphic description of the rescue of her little son.

Later in the evening Mary was presented to the great lady, who received her most cordially, and, by way of entertaining her, indicated the different notables in the room.

"The handsome couple who have just entered the room are Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan; you must see his play, *School for Scandal,* which is being given at Drury Lane, a

very entertaining piece. Mrs. Sheridan was one of the beautiful Linley sisters, an actress, although Sir Joshua saw fit to paint her as St. Cecilia. To-night she is more like Ophelia, in her pale-green tulle, with water lilies in her hair."

"She is lovely, and her costume becomes her well. And the pretty little lady in the blue gown, as blue as her eyes?"

"That is sweet smiling Streatfield, who can be weeping Streatfield in two seconds without rhyme or reason. Those wonderful blue eyes have a habit of weeping so becomingly that Madam Piozzi and her other devoted admirers are wont to call upon Sophie Streatfield to cry for the pure pleasure of seeing the tears stream down her pretty cheeks, which fortunately are guiltless of rouge, else she would not be willing to act Niobe for their entertainment. The sweet creature standing near

Sophie is poor Goldsmith's 'Jessamy Bride,' his first and only love, they say."

"And has she never married?"

"Yes, some time after Dr. Goldsmith's death she married Colonel Gwynn, who had been for years her devoted admirer; she is said to be happily married; but there is a pathetic expression about her eyes that makes me feel that she has never forgotten that early love."

"Does one ever forget it if it is a true love?" said Mary in some surprise.

"No, perhaps not, Miss Thompson; but the world moves on and broken hearts are sometimes mended. Dr. Goldsmith was worthy of sweet Mary Horneck, and I for one regretted the untoward ending of their romance. You must ask Lady Herbert to tell you the story some time; it is too long and too sad for a ballroom. The sprightly woman in lavender satin, who never stops

talking," said the Duchess, returning to her duties as a cicerone, " is Madam Piozzi, who as Mrs. Thrale was Dr. Johnson's great friend; and the little lady in gray standing beside her is another of his great friends, Miss Burney, the celebrated authoress of *Evelina* and *Cecilia,*" adding, " She is now dresser to the Queen in the room of old Haggerdorn, who has gone back to Germany. Not a place to be coveted, I assure you, Miss Thompson; handing hoops and stays and fallals to the Queen is Miss Burney's business now, instead of writing romances that all the world reads and enjoys. Mr. Burke told me himself that he sat up all night to finish *Evelina,* and Sir Joshua would talk of little else while he was painting my portrait. I am glad to see Miss Burney abroad to-night; she is mewed up like a nun in a convent at court. A dull court at the best," added the outspoken lady.

"Domesticity and dulness are its chief characteristics."

As Miss Burney drew near Mary noticed that her eyes were large and brilliant, of dove color like her gown, and that a humorous expression about the corners of her mouth added much to the charm of a face that, with no claim to beauty of feature or coloring, possessed an attraction of its own. Just as Mary was hoping to meet the little authoress, whose romances she had read and re-read, a voice at her side exclaimed, "Domesticity and dulness!" and a distinguished-looking man bowed low before the Duchess, repeating her last sentence and adding, "What a sentiment from you, Madam, the most domestic as well as the most beautiful of Duchesses!"

"A Daniel come to judgment! Behold the defender of domesticity in the cynic of Strawberry Hill!" exclaimed the Duchess,

turning toward the newcomer her brilliant, spirited face.

"I a defender of the domestic virtues? Heaven forbid! I may, however, be permitted to admire where I may not emulate."

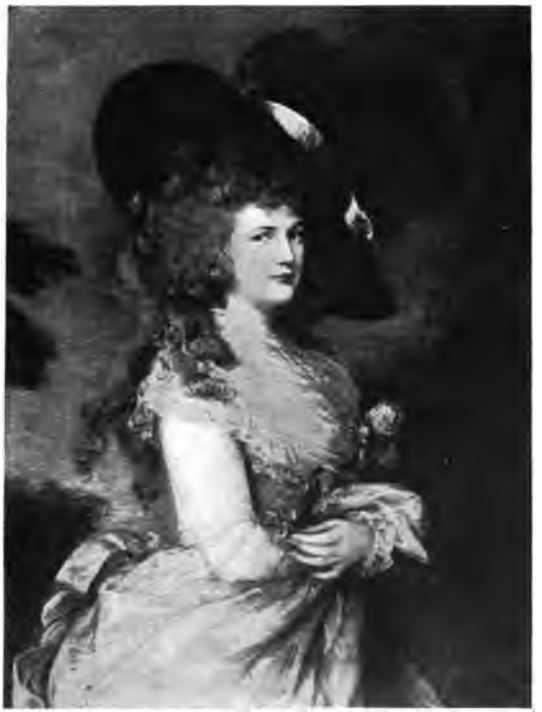
"My remarks upon the dulness and domesticity of the court, Sir Horace, were *à propos* of little Miss Burney's secluded life there, which you, yourself, said was 'the live burial of talents.'"

"I am more than honored to have your Grace remember my poor sayings," said Sir Horace with a low bow, while the Duchess continued: "To help dress the Queen and to mix her snuff, which they say she does, *à merveille*, may or may not be congenial occupations for the first literary lady in England; but to spend the best part of the day and evening in the company of that stupid, captious Schwellenberg and her pet frogs must be a trial to flesh and spirit."

"I grant your Grace that the Schwellenberg is no charmer; but she is probably like the devil, not as black as she is painted, and Miss Burney has hours of freedom when the old lady is laid up with the gout, and she can run off from the frogs and the cards, as she has done to-night. She is coming to Strawberry to make me a visit with her father; perhaps your Grace will honor us with your company at the same time."

"Strawberry Hill and its treasures always interest me, to say nothing of its host; but now I am in the hands of Mr. Gainsborough who is the most *exigeant* of painters."

"I was permitted a look at the wonderful portrait to-day. Gainsborough has certainly painted your Grace with his most brilliant touch. In the years to come your Grace's great-grandchildren will look at that portrait and wonder if any mortal woman could have been so fair."



THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE, BY GAINSBOROUGH

"Why remind me of a time when I shall be a wrinkled and withered crone?" said the Duchess, a frown clouding her beautiful face.

"The goddesses yielded not to the claims of time or change, why should your Grace?" asked Walpole, with his most courtly bow; and then, in a lower tone, with a glance toward Mary, who, with Lady Herbert, had been an amused listener to his exchange of courtesies with the Duchess, "What have we here—something rich and rare? May I have the honor?"

The Duchess presented her companion, adding, "An American lady whom Commodore Nelson and Captain MacGregor met in Quebec."

"Ah! I have heard that Nelson received his *coup de grace* in Quebec. No wonder that he stopped there so long! The wonder now is that he ever came away"—this with

a bow and smile that might have placated a much haughtier beauty than Mary; but the intended compliment only served to bring an angry flush to her cheek, and Sir Horace, realizing that he was talking to a girl unfamiliar with the artificial life of a court, said in a very gentle, friendly tone, "I doubt not that there is much to interest a traveller in your country, Miss Thompson. If I were a younger man I would cross the ocean to see that new world of yours. Ah! here comes your friend, Commodore Nelson, to claim your hand for a dance. We old fellows must perforce give place to younger blood."

From his position at the entrance to the ballroom, in the pauses between receiving the many guests presented to him, Nelson's eyes had more than twice wandered toward Mary. That she was surrounded did not surprise him, for here, even as in Quebec,

she held her own in beauty and grace; indeed, to his thinking the passing years had added to her charms. Even when she stood beside the most famous beauty in England, it seemed to him that the difference was in kind rather than degree: the Duchess was the rich, full-blown damask rose of the parterre, while Mary was the wild rose of the hedge-row in all the delicate perfection of its loveliness. What surprised him was the dignity and charm with which this untrained American girl met the great folk who surrounded her. He was pleased to see that she carried his roses; whose were the other flowers—were they from MacGregor or from some new admirer? She would have admirers by the score. MacGregor was presenting a young officer to her at the moment when he, Nelson, was so deeply interested in watching her; she was giving him her hand for the dance. As he thought of Mary

wearing roses sent by other men, of looking into other eyes with those sweet eyes of hers, that had once looked so confidingly into his, a feeling of resentment took possession of him. It was quite plain, he said to himself, that he was unreasonable; yes, a very "dog in the manger;" but he wished that his roses had been the only ones that Mary carried to-night. The other flowers were doubtless Allan's; and who, after all, had a better right to send her flowers than Allan MacGregor, who was young, handsome, well born and free, worthy to mate with any lady in the land? She might marry him, he was evidently devoted to her; but he, Nelson, would carry her away from Allan for one dance, in memory of the Quebec days, that seemed so strangely near to-night. Yet, so complex is the mind of man, while these thoughts stirred his heart, he knew that he dearly loved the little woman who stood near

him, so proud and pleased over the honors paid him, those being the early days of Nelson's marriage, when he was still true to his Fanny, before the siren had spread her toils for him.

As soon as he could be spared from his duties as host Nelson excused himself to his wife, who was gay and happy, surrounded as she was by his friends, and made his way to Mary's side. To her came her hour of triumph when she crossed the ballroom upon the arm of the hero of the evening, followed by many admiring eyes. It was not, however, of triumph that she thought, but of the happiness of being with Nelson again.

As Nelson and Mary took their places in the dance, Sir Horace's keen eyes followed them. "The most distinguished-looking couple in the room!" he said to Lady Herbert. "Your American girl is a charming creature and better fitted to mate with the

eagle than the little dove, who stands over there by the door receiving congratulations upon the success of her hero. Very proud of him she is, of course, now that the world does him honor; but measuring him, all the time, by her own plummet-line, which reaches just one inch."

"You are cruel, Sir Horace. My brother says that this was a love match. Commodore Nelson met Mrs. Nisbet, a young widow, in the West Indies and at once succumbed to her charms."

"To the winds with your love matches! I should say to the deuce, if I were not talking to a lady. Socrates doubtless thought himself in love with his Xantippe—not that this gentle lady bears any likeness to Socrates' charmer. But, seriously speaking, why should not men and women allow their heads to rule them as well as their hearts in the most important affair of their lives?"

"It is not given to every one to bring matrimonial affairs to so successful an issue as to Sir Horace Walpole," replied Lady Herbert; "but then all the world is not blest with nieces as beautiful as his."

"Granted the beauty, Madam, but you must admit that my nieces are endowed with good minds as well as good looks"; and then, being somewhat sensitive upon the treatment by the royal family of his favorite niece, the Duchess of Gloucester, and fearing that something might be said of the unpopularity of her marriage, Sir Horace said, "I see that my niece is trying to attract my attention, from the other side of the room," and so bowed himself away.

Lady Herbert was still smiling over Sir Horace's tactful withdrawal, when Nelson brought Mary back to her place by her side.

"Who is the stately lady," Mary asked,

" with the lovely brown eyes? Sir Horace Walpole is talking to her now."

" That is his niece. She has lately been married to the Duke of Gloucester, to the great displeasure of the King."

" They were just in time to escape the Royal Marriage Act," Nelson explained to Mary. " Mr. Burke, who is talking to the Duchess now, opposed its passage with all the eloquence that he could bring to bear upon it, and Burke was right. Why should not one of the royal princes marry a subject as distinguished and beautiful as Lady Waldegrave? "

" She is good as well as beautiful, and beloved by every one, except the royal family," said Lady Herbert, repeating one of the *mots* of that day. " Sir Horace adores her and is in high spirits over the marriage, although he does not hesitate to say that he vastly preferred Lord Waldegrave

to the Duke of Gloucester, with all his royal blood, and, indeed, to my mind, Lord Waldegrave was worth a dozen Dukes of Gloucester." Having the independence of a Scotchwoman, Lady Herbert did not hesitate to express her mind freely. "Sir Horace has two fads—his beautiful nieces, and his collection of curios at Strawberry Hill."

"He told me of a third fad to-day," said Nelson. "It appears that he is now turning his attention to balloons. He talked to me for an hour about a balloon that some man is sending up from Vauxhall, and Sir Horace even prophesies that the balloon of larger size, and of different shape from the present one, will some day take the place of the ship. Fancy airships in the place of His Majesty's fleet now riding at anchor off Yarmouth!"

A stir and movement at the other end of

the room betokened the important fact that supper was served, and Captain MacGregor came with Mr. Edmund Burke to wait upon Mary and Lady Herbert. Captain Thompson, Allan assured them, was in the way of being well cared for, as he was with Mr. Boswell and other Scotch cronies.

"Your father has been telling us one story after another," said Mr. Burke, "each one better than the last, the last being an account of the taking of Quebec."

"That is his favorite tale," said Mary.

"A tale that I can never forget, nor the time and the place when it was recalled to me," said Nelson to Mary, in a low tone, and then, turning to Mr. Burke, he said: "When I was in Quebec Miss Thompson and I stood near the scene of that great victory, and then and there, when I was descanting upon General Wolfe's bravery, she convinced me—yes, actually convinced

me—that Montcalm was quite as much of a hero as Wolfe."

"And so he was!" exclaimed Mr. Burke. "No braver gentleman ever drew a sword than the Marquis de Montcalm. The odds were all against him, sadly against him!"

"Who is setting up French bravery against that of England?" asked Mr. Charles Fox, joining the group, "If it is Commodore Nelson, he will have to fight his battles later in the evening, as a very great lady is waiting for him to take her in to supper."

"And so to wait upon that very great lady, whose name I do not even know, I am forced to leave two very charming ladies," said Nelson, bowing and withdrawing; but not before he had asked Mary to give him the first dance after supper.

After supper Mary and Nelson walked and talked together in the garden into which

the ballroom opened, and Mary wrote in her diary the next day:

"An hour of happiness came to me last night when Nelson and I walked in the garden together. Away from the light and confusion of the ballroom, in the moonlight, with my hand on his arm, I could almost believe that we were once more in Quebec. It was a fleeting pleasure, and now it seems like a dream; all this life in London will soon seem like a dream,—Nelson leaves to-day, and I shall see him no more. It is better for me that he goes, better for us both, perhaps; for while I walked with him last night, in the garden, feeling once more the charm of his voice and manner, I had a curious consciousness that I could bring back his love if I would. That last is a wicked line, and should be blotted out of my diary, for I love him far too well to think twice of what would wreck his life. Nor

would I bring tears to the eyes of his gentle little wife, his chosen bride, who looks so happy, is so proud of her husband, as she may well be, and feels so sure of his love. He goes his way and I mine; soon I shall be only a memory to him, a memory that will grow fainter as the years go by, but I am glad that I have seen him and heard everything from his own lips. To know that he did not forget means much to me, and that he wrote to me and wondered at my not answering his letter,—that letter that never reached me!

"Among the many people whom the Duchess of Devonshire pointed out to me last night was a lovely Mrs. Gwynn. Lady Herbert tells me that when she was Mary Horneck she and Dr. Goldsmith were in love with each other, and now she has consoled herself and is happily married to Colonel Gwynn. It seems that in this gay London world it is not only men who forget."

CHAPTER IX

By the Temple Fountain

During the fortnight that intervened between the ball and the Thompsons' departure for Scotland it seemed as if Allan MacGregor and his sister vied with each other in providing pleasures for their entertainment. One night they went with a gay party to Covent Garden to see Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer,* which Lady Herbert said Captain Thompson and Mary must see before they left London, as it was one of the cleverest satires of the day. Lady Herbert had been present at its first production, when all the *literati* of London filled the boxes, and Dr. Johnson's mighty roars of laughter over Tony Lumpkin and the scene at the "Three Pigeons" fairly shook the house.

Another night they saw Mrs. Siddons in one of her great parts, and upon others the little party of four entered into the lighter amusements of Vauxhall or Ranelagh's. For each day some pleasure was planned, and in all of them Mary saw Allan's thoughtful hand. Much as she enjoyed the London theatres, Allan found that she infinitely preferred the little water parties that he arranged for her on the Thames, and many afternoons were spent at Greenwich and Richmond Hill. An afternoon at the Star and Garter, when they had tea on the terrace, with the Thames below and all London spread before them, Mary afterwards recalled as one of the most perfect evenings of these last weeks in London. They returned by the Thames, in the long lovely twilight. Allan talked to Mary, as he had never talked before, of his old home in Scotland, the home of his boyhood, which he

loved better than any place in the world. "I wish you could see the old place, Mary," he said, for it was now Allan and Mary between these good friends. "It is not fine at all like the English country seats that you will see on your way up to Scotland; but you will love the rugged hills and the pretty little lochs set in between them. I have been talking to your father, and he tells me that the old place where he was born is not far from our Highland home."

"Your heart is in the Highlands," said Mary, laughing at his enthusiasm, and singing a verse of the old song, in which her father joined with his rich bass.

"Another accomplishment!" said Lady Herbert, as the two voices, so well attuned, floated out upon the still night air. "I did not know that you and your daughter sang so charmingly together, Captain Thompson."

"Mary sings like a bird on a bough; but I only raise my voice when the song is of my ain countrie, Madam."

When she came home that night, Mary wrote in her diary:

"Lady Herbert—Agnes, as I call her now—has given me a most tempting invitation. She has asked me to spend the autumn at her country seat in Devonshire, and to travel with her on the Continent next winter. It is hard to refuse, for I love to be with her, and I know that the old Quebec life will seem very dull and colorless to me after all that I have enjoyed here; but I cannot conscientiously leave my father to make the long voyage by himself, and then it would not be fair to Allan. He loves me far better than a woman should be loved who has no heart to give. When he left me at the door to-night he said, 'You will soon be in auld Scotland, and then, Mary, my

heart will in truth be in the Highlands.' Allan is too good and true to be wounded in the house of his friends; just now his friendship is doubly dear. May I not enjoy it the few days we are in London? Then will come the Scotch relatives and the long voyage."

For some reason, perhaps unknown to herself, Scotland and the Scotch relatives did not seem altogether without interest to Mary after that night.

One afternoon a few days before Mary and her father were to leave London for Scotland, she and Allan took one of their favorite London walks along the Strand by Temple Bar, and the old Round Church where the crusaders sleep their last sleep, and so through Brick Court to the Temple Fountain. Here they sat long, silently watching the doves bathe in the stone basin and preen themselves upon its brim. Allan was oppressed by the shadow of the coming separa-

TEMPLE BAR, LONDON

tion, and Mary, now that so few days were left, was beginning to realize how she would miss the pleasant companionship that had made her London life so happy.

Allan finally broke the spell of silence by saying: "I have often dreamed of sitting here with you, Mary."

"And when did you dream of sitting here by the fountain with me, Allan?"

"Long ago, in Quebec."

"In Quebec!" exclaimed Mary, her eyes wide open with wonder.

"Yes, Mary; don't you know, has not your woman's intuition told you that I have loved you from the first hour that I met you?"

"I have sometimes thought that you cared for me a little since I have been in London; but not then, not so long ago."

"A little, Mary!—how could any one care for you a little? I loved you from the

moment that you laid your hands in mine and stepped out on the floor of the ballroom to dance with me; but when I found that Nelson loved you, I knew full well that there was no chance for me; for what mortal man could compete with him?"

"That is all over, Allan."

"Yes, and because it is over, I venture to speak, Mary."

"Nay, Allan, do not speak now; the answer that I should give you would not content you; you must know that the power to love as I have loved is only given to us once in a lifetime."

"Yes, but I am willing to take the second place in your heart, the first having been given to him; but to no one else but Nelson would I be second!" with a proud uplift of his handsome young head.

"You are worthy to be first always, Allan; no second place should be yours."

"Then give me the first place, Mary," said Allan, standing before her and holding out his arms.

"No, no, Allan, have patience with me. I like you so well that I wish I could love you as you deserve to be loved."

"Then stay here in London, Mary; stay here with my sister, spend this autumn and winter with her as she begs you to do, and I promise you that I will not press my suit upon you. Indeed, my orders may come any day. I shall be off and you will be here to comfort Agnes in my absence. Stay with Agnes and I will bide my time in patience, happy in the thought that you are with her. She loves you well, Mary."

"And I love her," said Mary. "I wish I could stay with your sister, but I cannot have my father take the long voyage by himself. He is too old to be given over to the care of strangers. No, Allan, I cannot leave him now."

"And will that be your answer when I go to Quebec with the question upon which my happiness depends?"

"Come and see," said Mary, turning toward him a face so full of sweetness and charm that he vowed, then and there, that before many months had passed he would go to Quebec and put his fate to the touch, and in the meantime, why should he not pay his Highland uncle a visit? The latch-string was always out for him, it would be a grateful attention to the old man, and to ride over the Scotch hills with Mary would be happiness beyond all words.

Allan went home that night, after spending the evening in Craven Street, singing gaily:

"My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer,
Chasing the wild deer and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go."

As the words of the song floated up to Lady Herbert's drawing-room, she smiled and said to herself, "It's no the wild deer that Allan will be chasing if he goes to Ballyheather this autumn; but it's a dear quite as hard to come up with. Mary, with all her gentleness and friendliness, is as shy of Allan's love as a fawn in the wildwood, and yet I sometimes think——" What Lady Herbert thought, she was not able to say even to herself, as her brother entered the room, before she had finished her sentence, full of plans for the morrow which needed the co-operation of this most helpful of sisters.

Allan had just heard that Mrs. Siddons was to appear in *As You Like It* the next evening. Although he thought the great tragic actress quite too heavy in figure and voice for the delicate part of Rosalind, Mrs. Siddons was well worth seeing in any rôle,

and as Mary had never seen *As You Like It*, he wished her to have the pleasure. Would not Agnes, like the good sister that she was, invite Captain Thompson and Mary to dine with her the next evening and take them to the play? Allan was, of course, to be included in this party of four.

"With all the pleasure in the world," replied the good sister. "I will write the note to-night and have it sent to Craven Street the first thing in the morning."

"Thank you, Agnes, you are always more than good to me," said Allan, kissing his sister affectionately.

"It's good to my ainsel' I am this time, Allan. You know that I like nothing better than to take Mary to the play, and watch her face while the acting is going on, and then Captain Thompson always entertains me. He is as good as a play himself. And you, Allan, are you going to Ballyheather,

this month? I heard you singing 'My Heart's in the Highlands,' when you came in to-night."

"Yes, Agnes, unless my orders come before I get off."

"I hope not. It will be good for you to be in the mountains for a week or two, and Uncle Alex will be so glad to have you."

"I am sure of it, Agnes."

"And you will be able to do so much to make their stay pleasant for Mary and her father, as Ballyheather is not far from their stopping place. Mary is not looking forward with much pleasure to the Scotch visit."

"No? Perhaps not; but she will change her mind when she gets up there among the lochs and the heather-bloom. Good night, Agnes, I shall be up and off early, before you are stirring, to secure the seats for the play."

It was of Ballyheather that Allan dreamed that night, of Ballyheather and fields of purple heather-bloom, and of Mary standing in the midst of it all, her hands full of beautiful white heather, the Scots' flower of love—a happy omen it seemed to this true son of Scotland!

CHAPTER X

The Tale of the Years

One of the favorite pictures in the Spring Exhibition of 179– was the portrait of a mother and son by Sir Joshua Reynolds. The woman was tall, stately, and in the full maturity of matronly beauty, dark-eyed, with dark hair and a face of great strength and sweetness. The boy, a little fellow of seven or eight, who held one of his mother's hands and looked up into her face, had dark eyes like hers and a head covered with golden ringlets. The lady was in a rich court dress in the style of the last years of the eighteenth century, a corn-colored brocade, with feathers of the same color in her hair. Over the chair, from which she had apparently just risen, was thrown a

cloak of crimson velvet bordered with dark fur.

"Sir Joshua was at his best in that portrait," said a lady, turning to the gentleman at her side, a naval officer of distinguished appearance who had evidently lost an arm in the service of his country.

"The portrait of a beautiful woman," he replied with much feeling in his voice, "but less beautiful than the original."

"You know this lady, then?"

"Yes, I knew her well, years ago, when I was young. She was the most beautiful woman"—pausing and correcting himself hastily—"one of the most beautiful, and the sweetest woman I have ever known."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the lady, with evident annoyance in her tone. "And you have known many charmers in your time."

"Many, but not one more charming than the American woman, now Lady Mac-

Gregor, whose portrait you have been admiring."

At this the lady, whose own face bore traces of great beauty, although she had already begun "to bury her beauty in fat," as George Selwyn or some wit of the day had said, turned aside to examine another portrait. Her companion, fearing, perhaps, that he had offended her by his frank expressions of admiration for another woman, took several steps toward her, then, seeing that she had met an acquaintance with whom she was talking with animation, he returned to his contemplation of the portrait.

A few minutes later, the lady being still in earnest conversation with her friend, he sauntered into the adjoining room. As he passed through the doorway he started, paused for a moment, then stepped forward, quickly, holding out his hand, and saying,

"Ah, I thought I could not be mistaken, Lady MacGregor, but, you see, my country has laid claim to one of my eyes, which must be my excuse for not recognizing you at once."

"And the years tell their own tale, Lord Nelson," said the lady, taking the hand that was held out to her.

"Not upon your ladyship's face, I assure you, but upon mine the tale of the years is plainly written, not only in the loss of an eye, but in various unsightly scars. And this, the worst of all"—pointing to his empty sleeve—"but, as England is still willing to employ a left-handed Admiral, I suppose I have no right to complain."

Tears gathered in Mary's eyes as Nelson spoke; she had heard of the heroic endurance that followed the unskilful amputation of that good right arm, and the months of suffering that had ensued. "Allan and I

mourned together over the loss of that valiant arm," she said, touching the empty sleeve tenderly with her gloved hand. "I trust that the suffering is well over."

"Yes, the London surgeon found that a nerve had been tied up stupidly enough with the artery, and now that the nerve has been released the intense pain is over. I only have an occasional twinge to remind me that I am mortal." Then, noticing the tears in Mary's eyes, he added: "When I applied to the bureau for a pension, they asked so many questions and made such a to-do about giving me indemnity for the loss of my arm that after the papers had been made out and signed I turned back as I was leaving the office and said: 'To-morrow I will call for the pension due me for the loss of an eye,' and so I did later, and got it after unwinding yards of red tape." This was said with a humorous twinkle in the remaining eye,

and so much in the tone and manner of the Nelson of former days that Mary smiled through her tears as she said: "You have given much to your country, Lord Nelson, and, after all, England does sometimes reward her living heroes as well as those who have gone beyond."

"Yes, sometimes after long waiting. And so you remember that I said something like that when we were talking about General Wolfe upon the terrace in Quebec; idle words of a young man; but I doubt if the years have taught me wisdom. And now, come back with me and let us look at your portrait together. I was studying it before I met you."

Mary had, from a distance, observed Lord Nelson, as he stood before her portrait, but had hesitated to speak to him, knowing who his companion was and realizing the embarrassment of an encounter with Lady

Hamilton. As they were about to enter the room she was glad to see that Lady Hamilton had left it. What she had not seen, but what had not escaped Nelson, was that the irate beauty had been walking up and down the room, and then, evidently out of patience at the long delay, she had turned toward the entrance to the galleries with a friend.

"Your portrait is very like your ladyship——"

"No, no," said Mary; "I am not ladyship to you, Lord Nelson."

"Nor am I Lord Nelson to you, Mary; let it be Captain Nelson as in Quebec days. The years have dealt gently with you," turning from the portrait to the face beside him. "You are still slender, although a little fuller than the slim girl who danced the *Matelot Hollandaise* with Allan MacGregor. Allan is a happy man. I do not wonder that he resigned from the service,

when he came into his own, to live on his estate with you and the boy. And you are happy, Mary, I read that in your face; and your boy? He is a handsome little man, as he could not well help being with his mother's eyes. They are your eyes, Mary."

"Yes, and his father's blond hair and complexion. He is a dear little man, your namesake."

"My namesake! And did you and Allan name your son and heir after me, Mary?"

"Yes, there is no one in the whole world after whom we would so gladly have named him as you, Captain Nelson."

"Ah! Mary, Mary, leal and true, is there a woman like you in all the world?"

"And did you not receive Allan's letter telling you about our boy and asking you if we might give him your name?"

"No, Mary, it missed me in some way; letters between us seem to have had a habit

of going astray, early and late. This one did not matter so much as that other one long ago which changed the course of our lives," said Nelson, looking intently into Mary's face until her eyes fell before his steady gaze and the color deepened on her cheek.

"No, it did not matter so much, as Allan and I took for granted your consent, and named our boy after you. If you do not like it you will have to disown him; but I assure you"—raising her eyes, now glowing with a mother's pride and joy—"that he is a namesake to be proud of."

"I am quite sure of that," said Nelson, looking again at the boy's charming face in the portrait. "I have no child of my own, and to have your son bear my name means much to me. I saw the notice of his birth in the London journals, and also that Allan had come into the family title and estates in

Scotland, and down in Southern seas, away from kith and kin, I rejoiced in your good fortune. You must let me see that boy of yours, Mary. Is he with you in London?"

"Yes, we cannot make up our minds to be separated from him, and Sir Joshua wished to see him again before putting the finishing touches to his portrait. We are only here for a few weeks, during the season. The remainder of the year we live the country life that we like best. My father and my aunt are both with us, spending their old age in their native Highlands."

"What happiness for them and for you!"

"And now," said Mary, holding out her hand, "I must say good-by, as I have an engagement with Lady Herbert. No, not good-by, let it be *au revoir,* Captain Nelson. Allan will be trying to get you up to Ballyheather in the autumn, to see us on our native heath."

"Nothing would please me better, Mary; but I shall be off to sea before the autumn; I am expecting orders every day," and then, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, he added: "How about that French blood that I used to hear about? The Scotch seems to be uppermost now."

"Yes, I am all Scotch now," said Mary, laughing, "since my name is MacGregor."

"All Scotch?" repeated Lord Nelson, shaking his head, doubtfully. "All Scotch, perhaps, except the charm and grace that must have come from some witching French ancestress. Do not disown her; you owe your heritage to her quite as much as to the canny Scotch. No, I do not flatter you, Mary; I am only telling you the truth." As Mary again held out her hand and said *au revoir,* he added: "Tell Allan not to fail to call to see me at the Admiralty," a shade of annoyance crossing his face as he said,

"I have no London home, you know. Tell him to be sure to bring the boy for his godfather's blessing."

When repeating this conversation to her husband the same afternoon, Mary said: "I was angry at first, Allan, feeling that Lord Nelson should not have spoken of the early days and that lost letter, now that I am your wife; but I forgave him the next minute when I saw the sadness that came into his face, when he said 'I have no child of my own.' With all his honors and successes, Nelson is not a happy man."

"No, Mary, how can he be happy in the clutches of that designing woman? Poor, brave Nelson, with all England sounding his praises he is not to be envied; but believe me, dear, he is more sinned against than sinning!"

"But to be under the influence of such a woman, Allan—she is not even beautiful!"

"No, not to you, my love; but she had beauty of a certain kind, as you may see from Sir Joshua's portrait. It is quite impossible for you, from the height of your purity, to understand the power that a woman of Lady Hamilton's sort can gain over a man like Nelson, sensitive, susceptible, easily moved by flattery. Yes, I see you shake your head, Mary; you never flattered him—no, of course you did not, you never needed to; but it is true all the same; these less desirable qualities, with many noble and generous traits, go to make up the character of the Nelson that we love and that England adores. And then, as if to make him an easy prey to Emma's wiles and enchantments, there seems to have been no real sympathy between Nelson and his wife. If Lady Nelson had gone to him when he was ill, or even if she had turned a deaf ear to the gossip that came to her, and had

gone to meet him when he came back to England, and entered into his triumphs with him, even then all might have been different."

"That would have been asking much," said Mary, shaking her head, "more than could be expected of her."

"Yes, perhaps too much to expect of Lady Nelson, as you say, Mary; but you must remember that Nelson is no ordinary man, and that with all his faults he has a heart as tender as a child's. Defending him? Yes, perhaps I am, dear love," said Allan, taking Mary's hands in his and looking into her sweet eyes, like the lover that he was. "And who has a better right to be generous to Nelson than I, when I remember how different his life might have been had things gone otherwise in the old days in Quebec? True happiness might have been his as well as glory, true happiness such as I know;

and you, Mary; are you sure that you are quite content?"

"Oh, Allan, how can you ask me such a question? I—I would not change places with the Queen on her throne!"

"Or I with the King!" said Allan, laughing. "And here comes the young heir-apparent to claim our attention," as little Horatio bounded into the room, bright and rosy from his afternoon walk.

"You will take him to the Admiralty to see his godfather?" said Lady MacGregor as the child climbed into her lap.

"Certainly, my love, and very soon. From what I heard at the coffee-house to-day, some demonstration is looked for from the Baltic, and Lord Nelson may be sailing any day."

The Laird of MacGregor and his son saw Lord Nelson more than once before the latter sailed. The second time that his

father took Horatio to the Admiralty, Nelson had him on his knee, and, looking long and tenderly into the boy's eyes, said: "You are a happy man, Allan, with a wife and a son such as yours. This is for the young Laird to remember his godfather by," taking off his own watch and throwing the chain around the child's neck.

Once again Lady MacGregor met Lord Nelson—this time in Hyde Park, where he happened to be walking alone. They stopped and had a few words, chiefly about little Horatio, to whom his godfather had taken a great fancy. When Mary told him that the boy would not part with the watch that the "Great Captain" had given him, even at night, and slept with it under his pillow, the rare brilliant smile, that Mary knew so well, lit up Nelson's face, as he said, "Blessings on the little Laird's pretty

head. Who knows, Mary, some day he may sail the seas with——"

"'The Great Captain,'" said Mary. "That is his own name for you."

"And a good name it is, the best I have ever had! Believe me, Mary, the happiest days of my life were those when I was a captain, not a great captain either, as the little Laird is pleased to dub me. Don't let him forget me, Mary."

"There is no likelihood of his forgetting you, as he talks about the 'Great Captain,' from morning until night; he wants to know how big your ship is, and asks more questions about the sea than his father can answer. Ah! here he comes with his aunt, Lady Herbert, to carry me away."

Lord Nelson handed Mary to her place in the carriage and stood for a few moments talking to Lady Herbert and little Horatio. As they drove away, his mother held him

up on the seat beside her to take a last look at his godfather. Instantly, without a word from her, the little fellow uncovered his curly head and waved his cap to Nelson. Mary often thought of him as he stood under the trees that June afternoon, his uncovered head flecked with the sunshine that filtered through the leaves, hat in hand, bowing his farewells to Mary and her boy, the smile that the child's warm greeting had brought to his face still lingering there,—a smile like the sunshine itself. It was farewell indeed, for Mary saw Nelson no more. A few days later his fleet sailed for the Baltic, where victories awaited him and fresh honors.

Soon, all too soon, while England resounded with his praises, and life was still in its prime, the summons came to "The Great Captain" to lay down his arms.

England mourned her illustrious son,

through all her widespread domain, and in a home in the Highlands of Scotland tears fell for him as for a brother loved and lost. With bowed heads, in reverent silence, Mary and Allan read Nelson's last letter to his godson, which came to Ballyheather on the same day that they heard of his death. Looking into her husband's face, through eyes dimmed with tears, Mary said, "His will be the 'deathless fame,' Allan, that he prophesied for General Wolfe, years ago when we stood together on the terrace, that first fateful night in Quebec."

"Deathless fame will be his, and honors beyond those accorded any of our naval heroes. England cannot honor too greatly the memory of one who has added so much to her power and glory!"

THE END